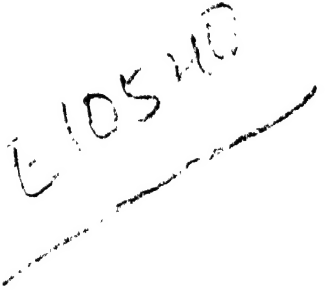


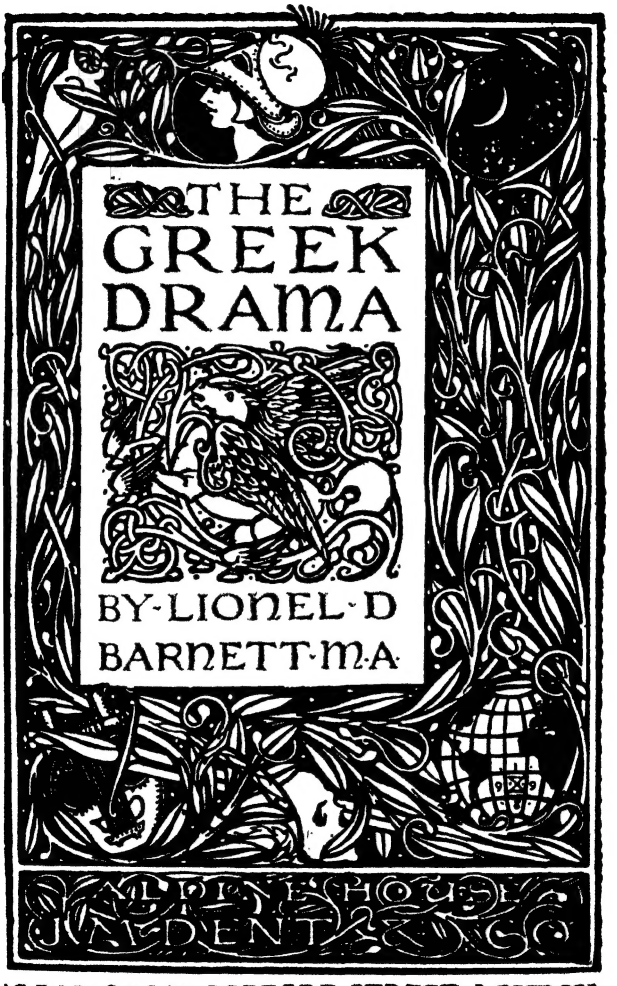
THE TEMPLE PRIMERS

THE GREEK DRAMA

By
LIONEL D. BARNETT, M.A.

DIONYSOS

From a Vase-Painting



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TO MY FRIEND

ISRAEL GOLLANCZ, M.A.

Σοὶ κείσθω, φίλε, τοῦτο· σὺ γὰρ χάριν ἤραο πρώτην
ἥ τέ μοι ἐκμήνασ' Ἑλλὰς ἔρωτι φρένα.

PREFATORY

This little book may perhaps meet with unfavourable criticism on the ground of its dogmatism. Taking the theatre of Athens as typical, as it was prototypic, of the Greek stage, I have given the views which in each case I approved, but have ignored contrary opinion. My limits however forbade me to argue *pro* and *con* in a branch of science where almost every step is disputable. Perhaps I shall be blamed for silently passing over many views upheld by good reason and competent authorities. To this I would reply that—with all possible respect to the latter gentlemen—the same may be said of the views which I have attempted to set forth; and I venture to claim at least the right of independent selection in dealing with hypotheses.

The question of transliteration has given me much trouble. In the abstract, I do not care in the least whether one writes *Nikias* or *Nicias*, and in the case of a few naturalised words it is impossible to break with convention. But the question becomes extremely serious when the choice is between frank transliteration of Greek case-endings and substitution of corresponding Latin inflexions, between Greek *-oi*, *-os*, *-on*, and Latin *-i*, *-us*, *-um*. To the Roman, the monstrous hybrids *Gytheum* and *Pisander* were natural; but what claim to naturalisation in English do they possess? The general influence of Latin on English, it may be said. But Latin has not in the least influenced our flexional terminations. Nor can we steer a middle course, which will lead us to such mongrels of

speech as *Lenaeon*, and hence logically to *Idaeoi* or *Sphaeristai*. In short, it is time to make an end of this Latinisation of Greek, which has done so much harm in the past to elementary teaching. Far better a page disfigured by unsightly transliterations than one ornamented with misleading hybrids. Besides, the modern Latinisers should be more logical, and, like their predecessors, give us the Greek deities in their 'corresponding' Latin titles, translating an Italian Minerva to Athens and a Jupiter to Olympia.

To the endless literature up to 1890 I have given few bibliographic references; the reader will find the lists in the writings of Christ (*Griech. Litteraturgeschichte*, I. Müller's *Handbuch*[2], vii.), Oehmichen (*Bühnenwesen*, I. Müller's *Handbuch*, v. 3), and Schanz (*Röm. Litteraturgesch.*, *ibid.* viii.). Bethe's *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Theaters* deserves special mention as being the latest attempt of scientific merit to buttress up the now tottering theory of a raised stage in the fifth century; Haigh's *Attic Theatre* I had no leisure to examine until this book was in type. To other publications I have, I believe, acknowledged my indebtedness in notes; where I have failed to do so, I trust that I may be forgiven this carelessness in a book which claims no spark of originality.

And lastly I would put on record a debt of gratitude. My deepest thanks are owing to my friends and teachers in both Germany and England. To them is due all that is good in these pages; the faults are my own.

TRINITY COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE.

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CHAPTER I

The Elements of the Drama

§ 1. **The Man and the God.**—The word 'myth' properly means 'story,' for it is only in the form of stories that the world around him becomes thinkable to early man. The most important myths are those which we call Nature-myths. Man gets rude ideas of spirits from the bodiless forms of dreams; these he connects on the one hand with the souls of the dead, on the other with the workings of outer Nature. To explain how these spirits set up the activity of Nature, he has recourse to stories, in which he believes, because he cannot imagine any other explanation. He can only understand, for instance, the course of the seasons by saying to himself that the Earth-Mother, embraced by the Father, brings forth the Maid, who in her turn becomes the Mother, and bride of the father, year after year, so long as the wood and the field grow green. Such stories are neither moral nor æsthetic—that is, influenced by any sense for beauty—because the men who framed them were practically without moral and æsthetic feelings. These come later, as time begets increasing respect for tribal law and growing arts.

Akin to the Nature-myth is what the Greeks called the *aition* or 'cause,' *i.e.* a story which in the first place was invented as a guess to explain a custom of forgotten origin, and soon came to be accepted as a historical truth. Mythology too is full of pure novels, heroic tales and stories told originally either as stories and nothing more, or else as vehicles to convey a moral, which men in course of time came to regard from the same standpoint as other myths,

i.e. as historical. Finally, many mythologies find place in their later stages for abstractions like Love and Fate, and invent figures or stories to make clear the connexion between different tales.

The history of these myths is the history of civilisation. In their fruitful combinations each phase of advancing culture leaves its imprint. Novel developments of social life evoke fresh *aitia* and myth-spinning speculations; widening experience and thought beget new ideas to be predicated of the old gods, often to the obscuration of their former attributes. Still, growing morality does not immediately and completely remodel the older stories of religion. The myth begins in ages as yet lacking in morality; and when the latter commences to assert itself, it is prevented by the conservatism of religion from immediately sublimating myth. Hence there was in Greece a constant discrepancy between the moral code of the nation and the stories of their religion, which the philosophers were not slow to remark, and which the drama sought to remove, either by moralising myth or by disproving its title to sanctity.

§ 2. **The Mummery.**—Among the dealings of early man with his gods there is one of peculiar interest, which we may call *imitative* or *sympathetic magic*.[1] Its principle is that between man and god there is some kinship of being such that, if the man wishes the god to do a certain thing, he has but to mimic the action, and the god will somehow be compelled to do it in reality. For instance, when men wished to make certain that the kobolds and spirits giving increase and foison to field and woodland would arise fresh and lively from their winter's sleep, they would masquerade in a fantastic dress which they imagined to be appropriate to these fairies, and do many things which they thought suggestive of liveliness and energy, such as dancing, singing, jesting, shouting, and running about—practices still kept up in many parts of the world, even in Europe. In Greece,

[1] See Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, I. i.

as we shall see, these mummeries survived in two forms. Some troops there were which, despite their fantastic costumes, had never developed the idea of a real impersonation, but sang in their own part, *as men*; while there were also bands which played assumed *rôles*, whether as comic kobolds or (later) as clown-comedians. Of course the original meaning of these shows was usually forgotten.

§ 3. **Dionysos.**—This brings us to the god in whose worship the Greek drama in all its forms began. Dionysos[1] was originally, it would seem, a god of the Thracians, who adored him as a deity of vegetation and giver of earth's increase. Very early his worship travelled southward into Greece, where he supplanted or attracted into his own sphere of legend native gods of a more colourless character, such as the *Sīlēnoi*, who were originally fairies giving moisture and fertility to the fields and forests, but in historical times appear regularly as attendants of Dionysos —comic figures like men except in having horses' ears and tails, and adorned with bald heads, snub noses, *phalloi*, and a general expression of rude humorous wantonness.

Dionysos is usually figured in art, until the fifth century, as a stately bearded man; and always, even when he is represented as a boy, he wears an expression of dreamy gentleness. This contrasts strangely with the *orgiasm* or ecstatic worship of his cult, a feature appearing more or less in most nature-religions. Legend told of the comrades of Dionysos, the *Mainades*, women inspired by a frenzy of devotion, who were clad in skins of goats or fawns, who clashed cymbals, waved torches and *thyrsoi* (the sacred rods capped with fir-cones and garlanded with ivy), beat hand-drums, and blew shrill flutes. There is some history in these mythological pictures. Dionysos in the north was certainly adored by women with ecstatic rites; and when believers in Greece told of strange women who roamed about with the foreign god, possessed with his inspiration and with a feeling of wild elemental life, they unconsciously

[1] The name Bacchos is not his regular title in Greece.

canonised his northern devotees and attributed to them, only in a much greater degree, their own frenzied excitement and feeling of union with elemental beings.

This ecstasy of worship is the reason why the vine became the chief attribute of Dionysos. The ecstasy was a necessary part of the ritual, which wine, when discovered, was useful in stimulating. Wine, becoming more and more indispensable to produce artificially the religious emotion, was soon felt as the sacrament or eucharist of the god, as the chief medium in which his presence was manifested and union with him consummated So his earlier associations with the woods and fields came to be almost—sometimes quite—forgotten. He became the god of wine, who gives blessed exaltation above worldly care; this is the spirit of the Dionysiac festival in which the drama grew up.

§ 4. **Dionysiac Shows.**—We have above (§ 2) spoken of troops which played assumed parts, as a development of 'imitative magic.' Their *rôles* were originally those of nature-spirits or field-fairies, who, when the worship of Dionysos came into Greece, were associated with him in legend and ritual mummeries. The Silenoi (§ 3) are of this class; and there can be, I think, little doubt that they figured in popular farces among the Ionic races with the same comical features as on the vase-paintings. Here mummeries gave rise to farce; admiration of the skill with which a man, on the occasion of some ritual intended to stir up the nature-spirits, danced or sang in the imaginary dress of one of them was followed by the conception of the man playing the part as a dramatic *rôle*, imitating the imagined and imaginable acts of such a spirit in an interesting and amusing way; and thence, assisted by man's inborn taste for mimicry, arose the idea of play-acting and play-making in general.[1]

The clowns who in the Peloponnesos and Doric Italy[2]

[1] See the article 'Dionysos' in Roscher's *Lexikon*, i. p. 1080.

[2] They have been conjectured to be older than the Dorians, and to belong to the religion of the native Achaians of the Peloponnesos.

danced and acted farcical scenes were also at the outset actors mimicking the sport of nature-spirits. A Corinthian vase (Fig. 2; *Annali dell' Inst.* 1885, pl. D., and *Archäol.*

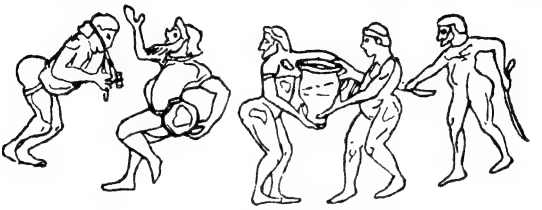


FIG 2.—CORINTHIAN CLOWNS

Jahrb. 1893, p. 91), gives a picture of them which proves this; for over one of the figures is written the name *Om[b]rikos*, which tradition says was a bye-name of Dionysos used in Halikarnassos, a city whose population was partly of the Peloponnesian stock. Ombrikos then is probably an old Peloponnesian nature-god of the same sort as Dionysos the vegetation-spirit; and the latter in some parts drew him into his circle as an attendant sprite, as he drew the Silenoi, while elsewhere the two were identified, as Dionysos was identified with the Italian Liber. The clowns who on the vase play the *rôle* of comic kobolds have none of the attributes of beasts such as the Silenoi wear; and they are grotesquely padded on the stomach and haunches, as were their descendants, the actors of a regular farce.

There was in the Peloponnesos another type of nature-spirit, the *Satyros*, or *Tragos*, which originally had no connexion with Dionysos. These fairies are figured as clad in goatskins and with goats' tails and legs[1]; the actors personating them naturally could wear only the two former attributes. If we can trust Herodotos (v. 67), popular imagination grouped them—in Sekyon at any rate—around the 'hero' Adrastos of Sekyon, like the Silenoi around Dionysos; for we read that before the reign of Kleisthenes

[1] The typical satyr is Pan, the god of Arkadia.

(about the first half of the sixth century) 'tragic choruses,' *i.e.* choruses of Tragoi or Satyroi, mummers dressed as goat-spirits, performed in honour of Adrastos, but were transferred by Kleisthenes to the service of Dionysos. These troops must have found their way early into Attica and Athens, for here also they were already before the end of the sixth century connected with the Dionysiac worship.[1]

§ 5. **The Choral Lyric.**—Sketching thus the outlines of the elements constituting the Greek drama, we have arrived at the dividing line which separates the mummery from the play. We have learnt to recognise the two elements of the play,—on the one hand the choral song and dance, on the other the speech, whether it be jest or recitation; the combination of these gives birth to the drama. Further, we have remarked that there were choruses in which the dramatic spirit, the idea of acting the part of another, is lacking (§ 2), probably because the speech, as opposed to choral song, was little, if at all, developed in them.

The first combination of choral performances with the speech was the Doric farce performed by the Peloponnesian clowns. Here the speakers and the chorus were not distinct, and the choral lyric seems to have gradually vanished from the performance. Hence we may for the present neglect it.

There remain then two classes of choruses—one of song and dance alternating with speeches, the other pure song (with dance). From the former arise the choric parts of the Attic satyr-play and its offshoot Tragedy (on which see § 7 (1) and ii. §§ 1, 2), from the latter the chorus of the Old Comedy of Athens (iv. § 3). Both of these are originally Dionysiac forms of choral lyric in general, which now calls for a few remarks, since already in the pure lyrical forms certain dramatic potentialities are visible.[2]

[1] Something similar happened about the end of the seventh century in Corinth, where Arion is said to have transferred to them the performance of Dionysiac *dithyramboi*—on which see § 5—and to have formed a 'tragic' style.

[2] Boeckh's remarks (*Staatshaushaltung d. Ath.*, ii. 361 ff., C.I.G., i. pp. 763 ff.) are well worth consideration.

All choral lyrics were a combination of song and dance. Being all of religious origin, they had a different tone according to the different worship with which they happened to be associated; for instance, stately measures were performed in solemn rites, while for passionate cults like that of Dionysos fiery eager measures were needful. Seemingly it was about the beginning of the seventh century B.C. that the great innovation was made. Alkman, an Asiatic Greek (he is said to have been from Sardes), who made his home in Sparta, composed choral lyrics which were antistrophic—*i.e.* one section (*strophē*) written in a certain metre and sung by the whole or a certain part of the chorus is followed by another section (*antistrophē*) in the same metre and of the same length, which is in turn performed by either the whole chorus or by a part of the chorus. Thus his *Parthenion* consists of heroic lays sung by the whole troop and followed by a series of songs in which different members of the chorus of girls sing each a short section with appropriate dances; each one of these divisions is antistrophic and parallel to another. Another great lyric poet who lived, according to tradition, later in this century, Teisias surnamed *Stesichoros*, adopted this principle,[1] which henceforth was much used in lyric composition.

Now we find in the fragments of Alkman some germs of dramatic action. In the Parthenion, each of his singers speaks in her own person and of herself; the poet composes songs to suit the character of each. Elsewhere he goes further, seemingly taking part himself in dialogues with the rest of the chorus (*e.g.* Frag. 24, with which compare Frag. 26). Thus, although the performers as yet do not represent any personality but their own, they have parts suited to their individual characters. But of the true dramatic principle, assumption of another part, there is yet no trace.

[1] He added to the pair of divisions (strophe and antistrophe) a third, the *epode*, so that, if we figure the metrically parallel sections by the same letters, we get a series aa′b. This, with many variations, reappears later, as in tragedy.

The great poets who followed seem to have gone back in this respect. In the extant works of Pindar, Simonides, and Bacchylides the chorus has usually no individuality. It is simply the poet's mouthpiece; when it talks in the first person, it is the poet who speaks through it.

Later tradition however records 'tragic dramas' of Pindar, 'tragedies' of Simonides; and of the Dithyramboi of Bacchylides, one (xvii. ed. Blass) is a dialogue. But we cannot ascribe to these poets 'dramatic' treatment of their subjects, the attempt to represent under circumstances of approximate reality a developing action; their 'dramas,' or whatever they were called, were merely lyrics in the form of dialogue. In their extant works they have generally given up Alkman's division into a number of antistrophic sections sung, in part, by single performers, preferring that the whole chorus should sing both strophe and antistrophe if the poem were divided at all.

Thus by the sixth century there were performed in Athens two kinds of Dionysiac choral lyric. One, the 'cyclic' chorus,[1] was without antistrophic responsions; it need not further concern us. The other class was antistrophic. It was also in a sense dramatic when performed by the imported satyr-chorus playing the *rôle* of nature-spirits, though dramatic *action* was wanting; but the masquerading choruses of the country-side, or *kōmoi*, were despite their fantastic costumes non-dramatic, for they performed merely as men, without any special *rôle* of real or assumed individuality.

§ 6. **The Later Ionic Poetry.**—The verses, grave or gay, of the people had long been cast in the iambic or trochaic measures.[2] These entered into the systems of the

[1] It was also called *dithyrambos*, a name later extended to all choral lyrics without responsions, as those of Bacchylides (xiv. ff., ed. Blass). See Wilamowitz, *Herakles*, i. 79.

[2] The former is based on a *metron* (unit, literally 'measure') of four syllables alternately short, long, short and long; the latter on that of four syllables alternately long, short, long and short. But the first

earliest lyrics, and here underwent many processes of modification and elaboration. But meanwhile they still remained the vehicle of popular poetry; and among other uses they served as metres for much of the broad jest and ribaldry which masqueraders, on occasions offered by worships such as those of Dionysos and Demeter, exchanged with the crowds around them. Now there arose brilliant young poets like Archilochos[1]—the Burns of Greece—who sought a form in which to express in simple vigorous verse their personal loves and hates and thoughts about the world. The conventional technique and impersonality of the epic—'Homer,' as it was called—was unsuited to them; the elegy, its offspring, was still too formal and cold. So they turned with eagerness to the fresh energy of the people's iambics and trochaics. Of these Archilochos made a great literary vehicle. It was he probably who first used them for 'stichic' composition, *i.e.* he put together verses entirely built up of an equal number of trochaic or iambic *metra*. In these measures Archilochos told of his loves and hates and labours; Semonides of Amorgos lectured to the next generation on social subjects; Solon of Athens preached political wisdom and moderation to the early sixth century; and Hipponax of Ephesos still later vented his bitter wit in 'skazontes.'[2] There must moreover have been a certain amount of direct narrative—story pure and simple—couched in these measures.

§ 7. **The Results.**—We have reviewed in outline the elements which came together in the different forms of the drama. Now it remains to indicate, not without some anticipations, the results of their combinations.

(1) The Satyroi or Tragoi of the Peloponnesos were introduced into Attica, and brought into connexion with

syllable of the iambic metron and the last of the trochaic may be optionally long.

[1] Archilochos lived about the middle of the seventh century.

[2] Systems in which the second syllable of the last trochaic *metron*, or the third of the last iambic *metron*, in the verse was lengthened.

the worship of Dionysos in the second half of the sixth century.[1] These choruses consisted of men clad in goatskins and with goats' tails dangling from their girdles, who danced and sang in the *rôle* of comic spirits attendant on Dionysos. Their songs were often antistrophic (above, § 5), and, being choral, were Doric in character and dialect. About 534 B.C. Thespis of Ikarios, a parish of Attica, added to this troop a solitary masked actor, or more strictly a reciter, who addressed to them at intervals speeches in the Attic dialect, modelled on the style of the later Ionic poets, which started them off on new dances and songs. This was the beginning of the *Satyrikon* or Satyr-play. In the age of Aischylos this performance developed into *tragedy*; for already the comic satyroi of the chorus had to a large extent been superseded by more serious figures, and the subject-matter now came to be more regularly drawn from the epics. Tragedy, the result of this, was different in nature, not in name, from the older satyrikon; for since satyroi and tragoi are the same, *tragōidiā*, the 'song of the tragoi,' is in meaning the same as *satyrikon*, and probably the two names were at first used side by side.

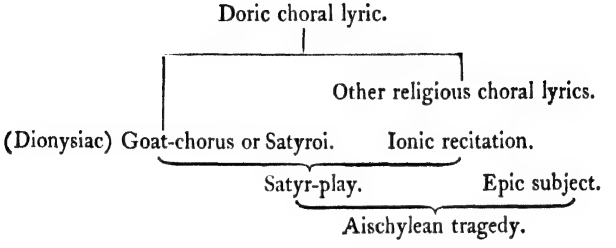
(2) The Doric clown-farce, a non-choral performance, arose from the song, dance, and jest of Peloponnesian bands mimicking in human costume the gambols of nature-spirits. The actor or actors belonged to the troop, and were not added from without.

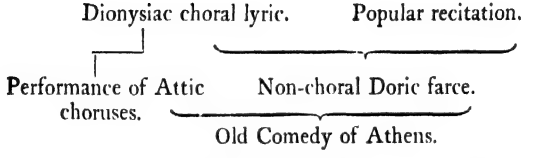
(3) Attic choruses (*kōmoi*) in fanciful dresses, but performing in their own part, as men, were in the fifth century joined by actors playing farcical scenes in the Doric manner. The combination was the Old Comedy (*kōmōidiā*) of Athens.[2]

[1] See Wernicke, *Bockschöre und Satyrdrama*, *Hermes* xxxii. 290 ff., who proves that the Satyroi in the chorus of drama began to be ousted after 450 B.C. by the native Silenoi.

[2] As *tragōidiā* is strictly the name for the performance of a satyr-chorus out of which tragedy grew later, so the word *kōmōidiā* is properly the song of the *kōmos* before it had become a comedy. In both cases the

The following tables synoptically show these developments:—





development in the nature of the performance was due to the addition of players from without; in both the name of the earlier phase was applied to the later.

CHAPTER II

Satyr-play and Tragedy

§ 1. **The Old Drama.**—A band of comic actors in the Dionysiac festivals playing with Doric song and dance the part of 'goat-spirits' attendant on the wine-god, and at intervals addressed by a reciter, who figured in the stately dress of Ionia as Dionysos himself,[1] with sententious speeches and narrative of the Ionic type dealing with the legends of the Dionysiac cycle and giving occasion for fresh songs and dances—such was the old satyr-play.

There were many scattered performances of this kind; but the Great Dionysia, which the enlightened 'tyrannos' Peisistratos founded some time in the second half of the sixth century as the national festival of Athens,[2] were their chief seat. Here were performed both 'cyclic choruses' (see i. § 5) and satyr-plays. There was neither stage nor theatre, as we understand the words. The audience stood, or sat on rough wooden benches, on the south-eastern slope of the Akropolis, looking down upon the *orchēstrā* or dancing-floor, a flat round space, on which all the performances were played, and around which ran a low wall. We have no reason to suppose there was any scenery.[3]

[1] We must not lay too much weight on the fact that the conventional dress of Dionysos in the art of this period is the same as that of the tragic actor later. Both were simply the 'full dress' of the Ionic races: see Studniczka, *Gesch. d. Altgriechischen Tracht*, p. 24 ff. The conclusion that the actor of the satyr-play represented Dionysos must rest on other grounds.

[2] This date seems to me far more probable than any later one.

[3] See below, vi. §§ 1, 2.

The plays thus performed were not more than half-dramatic; they had no plot. They were merely a series of scenes; a prologue was at first unknown, and even in tragedy before 470 B.C. it was by no means invariable. Then gradually arose a dialogue between the solitary actor and the chorus; as the whole chorus could not speak collectively, its leader recited on its behalf. Another step was to make the actor repeatedly change his mask and so personate several characters; and another seemingly was to cause the chorus to appear in several different costumes and *rôles* successively, in consequence of which the performances fell into as many divisions—acts, we may call them—as there were dresses worn by the chorus.

If the latter change really took place, as is probable, it had important results. When tragedy had developed in the fifth century, it was usual for each poet to bring out a set of four plays at once (*tetralogiā*), all connected in plot with one another; only the last of them had a chorus of satyroi and a generally humorous tone. This set of four plays must be descended from the old single drama of four 'acts.' A poet of the old drama presented *one* play; four times his chorus changed its dress, and four acts were thus constituted, in the last of which it appeared in its old original part of comic satyroi. When these four acts had been expanded, and the changes of the actor's mask increased, they became four plays, as the Greeks understood the word.[1]

Assuming this as proved, we can draw from it some further conclusions as to the nature of the old drama before Aischylos remodelled it into tragedy. In the drama of Thespis two elements existed side by side—the serious in the part of the actor, the comic in the goat-chorus. But differentiation must have arisen as soon as the chorus put on another dress. In each set of plays (or of acts) the first three would become more and more dignified throughout in the parts of both chorus and actor, the fourth more and more

[1] See on this subject Wilamowitz, *Herakles*, i. 87 ff.

consistently humorous. The result would be that about the beginning of the fifth century the first three plays of each set would correspond fairly well to our notion of the 'romantic drama'; they were no longer limited in subject to the Dionysiac cycles, and though generally solemn in tone they were dashed with a certain amount of humorous bye-play. The last play of the set again would have perhaps occasional touches of seriousness. The titles *tragōidiā*, *satyrikon*, *satyroi*, having the same meaning, would at first apply to all of these performances alike; the first term came however to be restricted to the three graver plays of the set, the others to the last and most humorous. This distinction in name and character is complete in Aischylos. With him and after him the first three plays became 'tragedies,' performances of generally consistent dignity and sublimity; the name *tragōidiā* is ever afterwards restricted to them. The title *satyrikon* (or *satyroi*) is limited henceforth to the fourth play with the satyr-chorus, which becomes throughout humorous; a surviving instance is the *Kyklops* of Euripides, where a fairy tale from the epos is handled in a graceful vein of light-hearted fancy.

In support of this view we may cite an interesting development of tragedy after Aischylos. In 438 Euripides brought out, in lieu of a satyr-play, the *Alkestis*, the motive of which—the heroism of Alkestis in undertaking to die in place of her husband—is one of deepest human pathos, relieved slightly by the happy conclusion and the figure of the dissipated demigod Herakles. Euripides was led to this step by an objection to the contemporary satyr-play, which seemed to him to be in too jarring disharmony with the preceding tragedies. So he went back beyond Aischylos to the older drama, where he found all plays touched with a certain element of humour or incongruity serving as a foil to the general background of solemnity and pathos; and on the model of this he constructed his nominally 'satyric' *Alkestis*.

Phrynichos, the great master of the generation before

Aischylos, also wrote an *Alkestis* of this 'romantic' description. It cannot have been a satyr-play in the later sense of the word; the chorus cannot have been of satyroi, for two reasons. Firstly, the subject does not lend itself to such a comic treatment as is inevitably implied in the use of a satyr-chorus. Secondly, Aischylos quotes an episode from it in his *Eumenides* (v. 728) which would be impossible if the play were not generally pathetic. Yet this episode—the drunkenness of the Fates which Apollon brought about to get a dispensation for his favourite Admetos—is almost burlesque in character. The play was as incongruous as any of the Elizabethan drama.

This suggests that the criticism is false which charges Euripides with having introduced undignified elements into the plot and tone of tragedy in a spirit of *fin-de-siècle* radicalism. In truth, Euripides was out of sympathy with his two great predecessors, with the devout majesty of Aischylos and the calm artistic rapture of Sophokles. He was a child of his age, a realist whose art eagerly grasped at the humours and passions and incongruities of daily life. But to find a vehicle for these inspirations he deliberately went back in nearly all his writings to the drama of the generation before Aischylos' prime—a drama of simple style, careless plot and frank incongruities,[1] which only needed a new leavening of Euripidean rationalism to become in his hands a powerful instrument of propaganda for the fifth-century Illumination. If we disregard their special purpose, several of the plays of Euripides would seem to be in essence the same as the graver compositions of Phrynichos (see also below, iii. § 3).

We know little more of the drama of Phrynichos, except a few names and fragments. Doubtless his plays were largely made up of recitation and song, with little action;

[1] Aristophanes (*Frogs*, 909) says of Aischylos, *τοὺς θεατὰς ἐξηπάτα, μώρους λαβὼν παρὰ Φρυνίχῳ τραφέντας*; on which the Scholiast remarks, *ἀπατεὼν γὰρ, ὡς ἀφελέστερος ὁ Φρύνιχος*. Euripides' style, despite its simplicity, has in some respects an almost affected archaism; and his carelessness about plots is quite archaic.

one guesses this of his *Capture of Miletos*, which, says Herodotos (vi. 21), recalled so vividly to the Athenian people assembled in the theatre the misfortunes of their Ionic kinsmen in 494 B.C. that they fined the poet 1000 *drachmai*.

Of the chief contemporaries of Phrynichos, Pratinas and Choirilos, we can only say that apparently their drama stood on about the same plane of development as his.

The number of the chorus in this older drama is not known. It must have been fixed by statute after 508 B.C., when the State, among many other things, nationalised the great festivals, and every citizen was liable to be called on to serve in the choruses—the richer to pay for training and dressing them and to lead them, the poorer to perform in them. It has been conjectured[1] that each poet had fifty men allotted to him, which he could distribute over his four plays in the ratio of about twelve to each; but this is unlikely. The chorus certainly might even exceed fifty, if we can reason from the analogy of tragedies, for the *Suppliants* of Aischylos has a chorus of the fifty daughters of Danaos and their attendants, if the latter really appeared and the former were represented in their traditional number; but the number was usually less, for it was only twelve in tragedy until the middle of the fifth century, when it was raised to fifteen.

§ 2. **Tragedy.**—It was in the generation of Aischylos (525-4 or 521-20 B.C. to 456 B.C.), by him or under his mighty influence, that Attic tragedy was shaped into the form by which we know it. The great reforms[2] which are usually—and on the whole rightly—ascribed to him are these:—

(1) He founded the classical division of plays at the Dionysia: first were represented three *tragedies* (*tragōidiai*), then followed the 'satyr-play,' which had regularly the chorus of satyrs and combined all the humorous elements which hitherto had been more or less scattered over all four plays. The only exception was in the case of nominally 'satyric'

[1] Wilamowitz, *Herakles*, i. 90. [2] See Aristotle, *Poet.* 10.

plays like the *Alkestis* of Euripides and the *Inachos* of Sophokles.

(2) He brought in a second actor.

(3) He made the dialogue mainly bear the burden of the dramatic action. He is already a master in the Attic rapier-play of dialogue, which in Euripides is exaggerated not uncommonly into dialectic and sometimes into sophistic. His chorus, though still playing an independent if somewhat colourless part, is subordinate to the actors; in Euripides it becomes more and more detached from the action of the play, and sometimes sinks to the level of performers of appropriate intermezzi.

(4) He—or a contemporary—placed in the rear of the orchestra a wooden booth, the *skēnē*, which served as a dressing-room as well as background to the scene of action. He is said to have invented scene-painting, which means that the front wall of this booth was painted to resemble the façade of a palace or temple. It apparently opened out into the orchestra by three doors.

(5) He made the actor sing as well as the chorus. He gave him not only solos or monodies, but also a part in a musical dialogue which he conducted with the chorus.[1]

(6) He formed the ponderous tragic style which, until Euripides dared to free himself in part from its conventional fetters, was compulsory on all writers of tragedy.

Other but more external improvements are also ascribed to him[2]; but the evidence is doubtful.

Sophokles had little to add to the drama thus constituted. He it was who probably

(1) Raised the number of the chorus from twelve to fifteen, giving it however a less direct share in the action of the play than is the case in Aischylos.

(2) Introduced a third actor.

[1] An important result of this was that the original Doric rhythms of choric song became modified by the introduction of both Aiolic and Ionic solo-measures, including the iambic and trochaic.

[2] *Vit. Aesch.* 13; Cramer, *An. Paris.*, i. 19.

(3) Brought out sets of plays unconnected in subject. He thus was able to make a decided advance in the technical perfection of the plot in each single play.

Besides a few technical improvements attributed to Sophokles, perhaps rightly, by his ancient biographer, some literary features deserve notice. They are (1) his increased tendency to resolve a long syllable in dialogue into two corresponding shorts; (2) his division of a line between two or even three speakers (*antilabē*); (3) his use of the apostrophe to cut off a short final vowel at the end of a verse when the next verse begins with a vowel; (4) the complexity of his plots (see below, iii. § 2).

Euripides' bold return to the older drama we have already mentioned (§ 1). Of his other changes we may note (1) his treatment of the prologue, which in his hands becomes a kind of versified programme, and (2) his *deus ex machina*, the god who so often appears at the end of the play to forcibly bring about that conclusion of the plot which tradition demanded, often in defiance of art.[1] For the rest, his style is a bizarre combination of everyday simplicity with archaic tricks of speech, strongly spiced with the rhetorical spirit which was beginning to cast so powerful a spell over Greek literature and thought. In his rhythms an increasing lack of severity of form is noteworthy; the resolution of a long syllable into two corresponding shorts becomes increasingly frequent, as well as the division of the same verse between two or even three speakers. His choric songs tend to become, despite their beauty, more and more intermezzi; a more important part in the development of the action is now taken by the solos (*monōidika*) and alternative songs (*amoibaia*); and a very popular lyrical measure, the glyconic,[2] is almost excessively common in his later plays.

§ 3. **Summary.**—The tragedy thus reorganised by

[1] See below, iii. § 3, vi. § 2.

[2] An example of this metre, in Latin, is the epithalamium of Catullus beginning 'Collis o Heliconii' (lxi.).

Aischylos is essentially epic in its interest, and remained so. The old satyr-play had drawn originally on the Dionysiac legend-cycles. But as the drama developed, it began to include both local legends (*e.g.* the *Alope* of Choirilos) and the panhellenic epos in its purview, combining with these even the topics of contemporary history (*e.g.* the *Persians* of Phrynichos and Aischylos); indeed the last-named element was often needful for the poet's general purpose of 'showing God in history'—the history of the myth-cycles as well as of actual experience—through the tetralogy of four plays of cognate plot.

In Aischylos these strivings found harmonious satisfaction. The Dionysiac legends are little regarded by him; only nine of his dramas can be attributed with certainty to these cycles. The mythico-historical interest is supreme. Except that he neglected purely historical subjects, Sophokles followed closely in his footsteps; and so—nominally—did Euripides.

That the epic interest should thus predominate was natural. It ruled the hearts of all Greeks. It was the Bible of the men of Marathon. But epic composition was a thing of the past; to be told afresh, the heroic thoughts of the epos needed a new voice. That utterance was soon found. It was the 'satyr-play' of Athens, in which had already been combined the old Doric spirit of choral song and dance and the later Ionic recitation of subjective thought and personal feeling. Fired with this new blood, the drama of Dionysos grew to unimagined strength. It was the new telling of a chapter in an old story, epic in conception if not in origin. It was no longer the exponent of trifling local legends, of mad Bacchic ecstasies; it was the voice of all that was highest and noblest in Hellas.

CHAPTER III

The Great Tragedians

§ 1. Aischylos.—Of the first dramatic poets we have already spoken (i. § 7, ii. § 1). Nothing remains of them but a few names, fragments,[1] and legends. Their great successor has effectually overshadowed them.

His father was Euphorion, of a good family in Eleusis, on the north-western coast of Attica. The year of his birth was either 525-24 or 521-20 B.C. He was one of the 'men of Marathon,' where his brother, Kynegeiros, displayed a valour that long lived in legend and was attested in the histories of Herodotos and the painting of Mikon and Panainos in the 'Painted Porch' at Athens. Already at the beginning of the fifth century (seventieth Olympiad) he had entered the lists of dramatic competition against Pratinas and Choirilos; his first victory seemingly was gained in the year 485.

About 470 B.C. he appears to have visited Sicily at the invitation of a great patron of literature, Hieron king of Syracuse.[2] Hither he came a second time, in 456-5, to die at Gela.[3] He left two sons and a nephew, Euphorion, Bion, and Philokles, to continue his literary tradition; and

[1] In Nauck's *Fragmenta Tragicorum Graecorum*, which also contains the fragments of the other tragedians mentioned in this chapter.

[2] Christ, *Litteraturgesch.*, p. 178.

[3] Apart from its wholly fictitious character, the legend that he was killed by an eagle which mistook his bald head for a stone and dropped a tortoise on it to break its shell is interesting to the historian, for its origin is a riddle.

again and again in later times his plays were worked up for the contemporary theatre.

Aischylos is the greatest of the Greek prophets, and with Pindar he is the last.

The minstrel of the Homeric epos (*aoidos*), in the days before the epos had grown sterile and was repeated by parrot-like reciters delivering without change what they had learnt, was felt to be inspired by a god to sing the deeds of godlike heroes. The forms of expression, indeed, the range of subject-matter, might be already fixed by the conventions of an ancient tradition; but these were only dry bones which lay ready to be clothed with substance and life by the singer when literally the spirit came upon him.[1] When, centuries later, the Ionic epos came over from Asia Minor to the mainland, the shepherd Hesiodos in the Boiotian hamlet Askra schematised the inconsistent stories of Greek religion in the epic form. Dull as the task was, he approached it in the spirit of the prophet, with simple faith in his divine call to preach the truths of the gods' family connexions. He feels himself a vessel in the hands of the Muses, the goddesses who haunt his native hills,[2] children of Almighty Zeus, who reveal to mortals truth of tale. 'This,' he says, 'is the tale they first spake unto me: *Shepherds of the wold, things of shame, sheer bellies, we wot to tell of much that is lie with the likeness of sooth, and we wot to sing sooth when we will.* So sang the ready-voiced daughters of Zeus the aigis-bearer, and gave me as staff the comely branch they had plucked of a lush bay-tree; and they breathed into me godlike speech, that I might sing the things that shall be and the things that be.'[3]

This old idea of inspiration—pitched in a new key—was soon echoed after Hesiodos in a great religious revival which

[1] Compare *Odyssey*, α 348, θ 481, ρ 518, χ 347.

[2] The word Μοῦσα apparently means 'she of the mountain'; this explanation of Wackernagel is better than the etymology which connects it with *mens*.

[3] *Theogony*, 22 ff.

began to pass over Greece. A deep sense of sin spread abroad. Poet-preachers announced their gospel of salvation through faith and mortification joined to ritual observance and mystical speculation; Heaven was revealed in visions to the inspired men of God.[1] At length this cloud passed away from the forehead of Hellas. Mystic ecstasy calmed down into a devout gravity of thought upon the world's moral problems; and to this it was Aischylos who gave voice.

Aischylos is a moral and religious teacher as well as an artist. No character could better suit the general Greek belief that the poet is inspired, possessed by the god (ἔνθεος), or, as it was sometimes crudely put, 'mad' (μανικός). The amazing progress which we can trace in his literary and dramatic technique proves him indeed to have been a most careful student and critic of the conditions of his art; but when he writes he writes in a white heat, and his 'mighty line' glows in unpremeditated, inevitable creation. Magnificent metaphors pour forth in disorderly profusion; forms stupendous in majesty or terror are conjured up by an imagination roving boldly amid the fields of legend; vague hopes and fears crystallise into truths of purest religion. Deeply conscious of the duty of his art to teach, he is unconscious of his art in the making. So, when in a structure of stately harmony the critic finds occasional details of harshness, or even extravagance, he echoes in an altered sense the words of Dante: *non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda, e passa.*

The subject uppermost in Aischylos' religious teaching is naturally the relation of Man, God, and Fate. To understand his attitude we must remember that of earlier generations. After the passing away of the first period, in which man saw in the god a being only in degree different from himself—equally irrational, but stronger—there came ages which had to solve a new problem. By means of the myth, the concrete mode in which early man thinks about

[1] See Diels' *Parmenides*, Introduction, 9 ff.; Wilamowitz, *Hom. Unters.*, excurs. i.

abstractions, had been evolved the forms of the gods as embodiments of natural powers. These powers having been originally conceived as capricious, almost lawless, the notions of the gods in the popular faith were equally irrational. But gathering experience made men more and more clearly realise the idea of order and necessity in the world. So in a dim way they opposed the latter idea to that of their gods, beings limited in almost as many ways as themselves, suffering anger and lusts and griefs and checks of every kind. The notion of order or necessity came too late in history to be successfully humanised by myths into tangible figures of godhead. We read, indeed, of 'Fates' (*Moirai*), 'Necessity,' and the like, and the Fates are as early as Homer figured as aged women spinning the threads of each man's destined life; but this was always felt as mere allegory, and to the end these forms remained shadowy, mystical.[1] Next below them stood the order of the Gods; these man had created in his own image, and they never lost the resemblance. Man and God alike, to the Greek, were of the same stamp. On both lies the yoke of Necessity, the will of Moira; on both come joy and hate and sorrow. Only gods are wiser and purer and stronger; and the better they are, the more do their acts and wills harmonise with Fate's predestination. Nearest of all to Fate is the supreme god Zeus, who by virtue of his higher godhead acts hand in hand with Fate.[2] The devout wish of growing culture to cleanse this greatest of gods from the defilement of impotence already led the epic minstrels to an occasional confusion between Zeus and Fate.[3] Aischylos again, while some-

[1] The burlesque of Phrynichos (above, ii. § 1) is no proof to the contrary. Even in Herodotos (i. 91) the Fates are shadowy enough.

[2] Cf. Aisch. *Eumen.* 1045.

[3] The first step is to coin phrases like 'Zeus and Moira,' 'Moira and the wrath of Hera,' and thence, as the idea of the gods' power is increased, 'Fate of gods,' 'Lot of Zeus.' Later came the legend of the Hesiodic Theogony that the Fates (there is but one in Homer, except in a late passage, Ω 49) were daughters of Zeus and Themis, by the side of the statement that they were born of Night (vv. 904, 217). It

times for like reasons speaking as though the Fates and avenging Doom were instruments in the hand of Zeus (*e.g. Agam.* 59; *Choeph.* 306, 949), also declares that they are higher than he, in a passage from a play in which Zeus and his pantheon are represented as young in power and not yet 'grown in grace' (*Prom.* 515 ff.). Apparently his pious explanation of the crudities of ancient myth was that time worked salvation for the gods, bringing their will into union with the moral principle of Destiny.

For now Destiny or Fate had a moral significance. At first it meant merely the ordinary 'condition of humanity,' which might be conceivably transcended by some extraordinary act, moral or not. But already in Homer 'moira' comes to mean sometimes the condition which *morally* bounds and limits human action.[1] This condition, in which the highest godhead and Fate conspire, is what the Greeks came to know by the term 'the mean.' They felt—and historical experience deepened their conviction—that a lot of moderate fortune was the only one fitted for man; if he by word or deed aspired to transcend it, he brought on his head the jealous anger of higher powers[2] and their vengeance. The lofty spirit begets lawlessness, and then descends Ate, the devilish obsession which leads a man with open eyes along the road of sin to inevitable ruin.[3] This vengeance may be prolonged through generations, Ate visiting the sins of the fathers anew on the children and children's children.[4]

should be noted that *moira* and *aisa* (and also *moros*, which however was soon specialised to mean 'death,' except in combination with *ὑπέρ*) signify originally 'portion,' 'share allotted to each.'

[1] See χ 54, 413.

[2] Aisch. *Agam.* 470; Herod. vii. 10, etc.

[3] Ate is daughter of Strife (Hes. *Theog.* 230), or of Zeus (T 91 f.). The fact is that she belongs to the same series of colourless abstractions as Fate.

[4] See Symonds, *Studies in the Greek Poets*, i. 368; Herod. i. 91. Now and then we find utterances in Aischylos (e.g. *Agam.* 758) in which he tries to modify current views, declaring this curse to descend only on haughtiness and presumption of spirit, and not of necessity on mere prosperity; against this, Herod. vii. 10.

Such a race were the Atreidai. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* knew them merely as a noble Achaian family of kings who from immemorial times had ruled in the Peloponnesos. But after the Dorian invasion had driven so many overthrown princes of Achaian stock and their followers into Asia Minor, a new series of legends under Dorian influence grew up around the figures of the old kings of the race. They now bore an ancestral curse, that began with the founder of the dynasty, Pelops, and passed on in a trail of blood and crime to Orestes. Thyestes, Pelops' son, shamefully wronged his brother Atreus, who in revenge invited him to a feast and there gave him to eat of the flesh of his own babes. When Atreus died, his sons succeeded; Agamemnon ruled in Mykenai,[1] and Menelaos was king of Sparta. To recover Helene, wife of Menelaos, whom the Trojan prince Paris had carried off, Agamemnon prepared a great expedition against Troy, in which most of the Greek princes shared. As they were about to take ship at Aulis, contrary winds were sent by the virgin goddess Artemis, whom Agamemnon had offended. The prophet Kalchas demanded as an atonement the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigeneia. She was slain,[2] and straightway the winds became fair, and the army set sail for Troy, where most of them were to find a grave. Here the *Oresteia* begins.

I. *Agamemnon.*—Prologue: a watchman, set by Agamemnon's queen Klytaimestra to look for the beacon-fires which were to announce the fall of Troy, at length (it is now the tenth year) discerns the light. He goes to report it to the queen, who is living in sin with the exile Aigisthos, son of Thyestes.

It is now daybreak. A chorus of Argive elders enters.

[1] In Argos, according to later Attic legend; the geographical difference is very small. When Argos had completely eclipsed and finally crushed Mykenai, it was naturally substituted for the latter.

[2] So said the old legend as used by Aischylos and Sophokles. The later version was that the goddess substituted a hind, and carried away the maid to be her priestess in Tauris, whence years after she was brought home by her brother Orestes; this is the story told by Euripides.

They are informed by Klytaimestra of the good news. Next comes a herald confirming the happy tidings, and announcing that Agamemnon is close at hand, despite a storm which in the night had all but destroyed their fleet. Now appears Agamemnon himself.[1] He knows of disloyalty at home. Yet, after coldly responding to the feigned raptures of his queen, he allows himself to be led into his palace in Oriental pride. Outside stands his captive leman, Kassandra, the Trojan prophetess whom none believe. Alone with the chorus, she is seized with the prophetic spirit, and to their horror foretells the imminent death of her captor and herself; then she calmly follows into the palace. The death-cries of the king are now heard, and the chorus see before them Klytaimestra, and at her feet the corpses of Agamemnon and Kassandra. She glories in her crime as a righteous vengeance. Now enters Aigisthos with his band of bravoes, and tells of his father's wrongs. Before the altercation between him and the chorus can develop into a *mêlée* it is masterfully quieted by the queen, who withdraws with Aigisthos into the palace, there to hold usurping sway.

II. *Choēphoroi* (the Libation-Bearers).—The scene is by the grave of the murdered Agamemnon, outside the palace. Klytaimestra, terrified by a dream, sends her handmaidens (the chorus) to pour libations on the tomb and thus appease the angry ghost. Elektra, her daughter by Agamemnon, joins them, and instead of doing the queen's command they pray for vengeance and the speedy return of the exiled prince Orestes. Orestes (who had already in the prologue appeared alone with his loyal friend Pylades) now comes forward and discovers himself to his sister. Apollon has sent him from his Delphic shrine to slay his mother and Aigisthos. After prayer to the gods and the sullen ghost of Agamemnon, the two friends enter the palace in the guise of strangers craving hospitality, and telling a feigned story of Orestes' death. Aigisthos, summoned to come alone and hear these tidings, appears for a moment and enters the house. His death-cry is almost at once heard. Klytaimestra now rushes in, and is confronted by the avenger, her son. Persuasion fails; she is led away to die. Orestes returns to announce his completed vengeance; but as he speaks the horror of it maddens him. The Erinyes, infernal demons sent to avenge kindred

[1] A brilliant and suggestive, if not absolutely convincing, study of the poet's apparent indifference to conditions of time and space is to be found in the Introduction of Dr. Verrall's edition of the play.

blood, with hideous shape and snake-locks, are already present to his fancy. He must flee as a suppliant to the god whose instrument he was.

III. *Eumenides*.—Orestes, pursued by the Erinyes (the chorus) and guarded by Apollon, who has formally purified him, at length reaches Athens, the beloved seat of the virgin goddess Athena, who summons a band of Athenian elders to judge between him and his pursuers on the Akropolis.[1] On his behalf Apollon pleads that blood-vengeance for kinsfolk is a sacred law, and that a mother is not kin of the blood.[2] The court being equally divided, Athena gives her verdict for Orestes, who now, purified and justified, is restored to his father's kingdom in Argos. Athena calms the enraged Erinyes, and persuades them to take up their abode on the Hill of Ares, as kindly spirits of the earth and guardians of the Attic soil (*Eumenides*); thus they become identified with the native Attic *Semnai* (August Goddesses) or *Eumenides* (Gracious Ones) worshipped on that hill and at Kolonos.

(The *Oresteia*, which was acted 458 B.C., ended with the satyr-play *Proteus*, which dealt with the adventures of Menelaos after the storm reported in the *Agamemnon*.)

The other preserved plays of Aischylos, in their chronological order, are as follows:—

IV. *Suppliants*.—Danaos, king of Egypt, appears in Argos with his fifty daughters (the chorus), who are fleeing from their cousins, who desire them in wedlock. They are taken under the protection of the Argive king Pelasgos and his people.

(This play belongs to a set which probably included also the *Thalamopoioi*, *Danaides*, and *Aigyptioi*, of which we know practically nothing except that they treated parts of the same legend.)

V. *The Persians* (472 B.C.).—This was probably second to the *Phineus*, and was followed by the *Glaukos of Potniai*, and the

[1] This is one of the legends framed to explain the origin of the venerable Athenian Court of Areopagos. The scene is first the Delphian, then the Athenian temple.

[2] This sounds ridiculous to us. But the view that the mother is only a foster-mother to the vital principle received from the father was not absurd to the ancients, and was piously worked out to justify legends such as this, and that of Alkmeon. That the play was a polemic against the principle of matriarchy (derivation of kinship from the mother) is most improbable, although there were perhaps relics of the latter in Greece.

satyr-play *Prometheus as Fire-Kindler*. Its scene is laid in the Persian capital, where the councillors of state (the chorus) and the queen-mother Atossa, after warning from the ghost of the late King Dareios, receive the news of their crushing defeat at Salamis, which is confirmed by the appearance of the stricken Xerxes.

VI. *Seven Against Thebes* (467 B.C.).—This play was probably third in a tetralogy, *Laios, Oidipus, Seven*, and *Sphinx* (satyr-play),[1] though its ending (vv. 996-1070) is a later addition. The Theban dynasty of Labdakos was under as terrible a curse as that of the Atreidai. Laios sinned, and the Delphic oracle foretold that his son would slay him and wed his own mother. Yet he heedlessly begot a son by Iokaste, Oidipus, whom he exposed on the hills of Kithairon. Oidipus was unhappily preserved and adopted by Polybos king of Corinth and his wife Merope. Unwitting of his origin, he slew Laios in a scuffle, and coming to Thebes found it kingless and oppressed by the riddling monster Sphinx, which he overcame by his wit. He now wedded Iokaste and became king. At last the truth became known. The old legend of the epos made him survive the disclosure and beget Antigone, Ismene, and the brothers Eteokles and Polyneikes by Euryganeia; Aischylos made these his children by his incestuous wedlock, and represented him as blinding himself as soon as the truth came out. His sons quarrelled over the inheritance of the kingdom, and Eteokles drove out Polyneikes, who found allies in Argos. The 'Seven' are these heroes as they beleaguer Thebes in championship of Polyneikes' claim; and this scene, with the awful necessity which drives Eteokles to single combat with his brother, and its end, fatal to both, is described in the present play.

VII. *Prometheus Bound* (466 or 468 B.C.).—This was second in a tetralogy, in which the third was *Prometheus Released*, and the fourth, probably a satyric play, *Prometheus as Fire-Bearer*. Prometheus the Titan had aided Zeus with the younger gods to oust his father Kronos and the older generation of heaven, including his brother Titans. But he fell under Zeus' displeasure, for he gave by stealth fire to the race of men, whom he found wallowing in deepest degradation, taught them the arts elevating life, and saved them from destruction threatened by Zeus. This play shows us the first stage of his punishment;

[1] On this play see Crusius, *Comment. for Overbeck*, 102 ff.; *Philologus*, 1897; p. 1 ff.

he is chained and nailed to a rock in the Caucasus, to be tortured by heat of day and chill of night. The daughters of Okeanos (the chorus) come from the caverns of the sea to comfort him. His haughty spirit is unconquerable. He knows the centuries of agony awaiting him; but he knows too one who shall overthrow Zeus—the son that shall be born to Zeus if he wed a certain goddess whose name he will not say. In this secret he glories to the chorus and Io, another sufferer whom Zeus has loved and abandoned to Hera's jealous revenge. For his contumacy he is hurled down into Tartaros, the chorus sinking with him.[1]

The *Prometheus Released* can only be reconstructed conjecturally. Prometheus, after countless years, is raised on his bed of torture to the upper air. Zeus, with the younger gods, has 'grown in grace; his reconciliation with the human race is complete, and from mortal women he has begotten sons who are saviours of mankind, such as Herakles and Kastor. Herakles slays the vulture which has been feeding on Prometheus' liver. Probably by Kastor, Zeus and Prometheus are reconciled, and the latter reveals his secret.[2]

The *Prometheus as Fire-Bearer* probably had some connexion with local Attic cult, in which he was associated.[3]

§ 2. **Sophokles.**—The life of Sophokles son of Sophilos (495-406) was uneventful. Beyond a legend that he was elected to the 'generalship' (*stratēgiā*) owing to the success of his *Antigone*,[4] there is nothing to record but unbroken prosperity. Few have been equally favoured by the gods.[5]

[1] They were probably freed with the conquered Titans after many generations, but before the liberation of Prometheus; see Robert, *Hermes*, xxxi. 577.

[2] See G. Haupt, *Commentationes Archæolog. in Aeschylum*, Dissert. Halle, 1895, p. 14 ff.

[3] Schol. to Soph., *Oed. Col.* 56; Westphal, *Prolegomena zu Aischylos*, 207 ff.

[4] See Professor Jebb's Introduction to his edition of the play, xliii. ff.

[5] He was seemingly worshipped after death as the *Hero Dexion* by a little chapel-community which was federated with the chapels of the Hero Amynos, whose priest he had been, and of Asklepios, whose worship on its importation in 420 B.C. was amalgamated with that of the native Amynos; *Mittheil. d. deutsch. archäol. Inst.*, xxi. 287 ff.

He was in no sense a great creative personality like Aischylos.[1] He is most interesting because in him all the streams of Periklean culture united. A polished man of the world, a refined sensualist of singular sweetness and charm of character, he was an ideal Greek. His works are in harmony. We miss in them the vastness of conception and mystical passion of brooding devotion, as well as the occasional harshness and violence, of Aischylos; in their stead we see delicate refinement of detail, harmonious proportion of part to whole, loving care in the development of both character and plot. He leaves us with a general feeling of artistic perfection, and—sometimes—a vague sense too that the highest note capable of being struck in man's heart has just been missed by him. For even in the first rank of greatness we may distinguish two classes of poets. In some the fancy prevails, often at the expense of the artistic sense, sometimes running riot, always champing the bit of formal rule. Such poets Aristotle describes as μανικοί,[2] 'mad'—divinely mad. Instances are Aischylos, Marlowe, Webster, and Kyd. The other class is formed of those whom he calls εὐφυεῖς, the natures in which artistic feeling is always superior to the fancy, imposing the yoke of rule alike on imagination and experience. Such were Sophokles and Göthe. Their art may be truer and greater, as art, than that of the more passionate natures; but it often lacks the inevitability of feeling, the shrillness of personal emotion, which is beyond the gamut of an art which dominates passion.

Like Aischylos in his *Seven* and *Oresteia*, Sophokles has to reckon with the Greek traditions of accursed families. But his tendency is to dwell on the springs of action in the human heart. He does not care to bring god and man forward on the same stage; he prefers to put human action in the foreground, with a background of divinity to explain and justify the dispensations of mortality. His religion is less definite, less concerned to figure bodily the divine forms of Greek scripture, than that of Aischylos. He speaks of

[1] See above, ii. § 2. [2] *Poetics*, 17. 4.

august laws born in the firmament, eternal, unbegotten of Heaven or Man.[1] Hence when he is treating the history of the race of Labdakos he recognises indeed the unhappy fate that broods over the family, but is far more concerned with its manifestation in moral act—be it pride of heart, or sin, or tragic choice of honourable death—than with its being as a mystic superhuman power.

The preserved dramas of Sophokles are as follows :—

I. *Aias.*—On the death of Achilleus, the Greeks before Troy awarded his arms to Odysseus. Aias, the other claimant, was deeply wounded by this verdict. He planned vengeance on the generals of the host, Agamemnon and Menelaos; being deluded by the goddess Athena, he slaughtered a herd of cattle, whom in his madness he took for those kings. The play depicts his anguish and self-reproach on returning to his senses. Pretending to be persuaded by the entreaties of his leman Tekmessa and his shipmates (the chorus), he withdraws, and in solitude falls upon his sword. The kings Agamemnon and Menelaos seek in a spirit of small spite to deny him honourable burial; but his more generous opponent Odysseus wins from them at last an ungracious assent, and the burial is performed by his half-brother Teukros and his little child by Tekmessa, Eurysakes.[2]

The date of the play is unknown; but it was considerably before 440 B.C.

II. *Antigone* (about 442 or 440 B.C.).—This play begins where the *Seven* of Aischylos leaves off. After the death of Polyneikes and the repulse of his Argive allies, Kreon, brother of Iokaste and now king of Thebes, forbids burial of the corpse of Polyneikes on penalty of death. Antigone, the sister of the dead man, is prepared to risk the danger; she scatters dust on the corpse and pours funeral libations, unseen by the watchmen set by Kreon. The enraged king bids his henchmen undo the work, and watch; they obey, and capture Antigone as she is repeating the act. She acknowledges the deed to Kreon, opposing to his ephemeral ordinances the eternal laws of kinright,

[1] *Antig.* 450; *Oed. Rex*, 863.

[2] The modern reader is apt to forget the enormous importance of burial—even of the formal burial by scattering a few handfuls of dust—to the Greeks. It meant all the difference between the perpetual repose and the perpetual disquiet of the soul.

and is condemned to die. Her lover Haimon, Kreon's son, fails to persuade his father of the impolicy and unpopularity of his decrees, and departs with a vow to share her doom. After she has been led out to the rock-chamber in which she is to be starved to death, the blind prophet Teiresias appears, declaring that the unholy prohibition of burial to Polyneikes must be recalled, and answering Kreon's refusal by a prophecy of fearful woes to his family. Terrified out of his pragmatic self-complacency, Kreon departs to see the corpse buried. But while this—formally the mainspring of the action—is being done, the critical moment of the heroine's fate passes. After burying Polyneikes, Kreon goes to release her. Too late; he finds she has hanged herself. Haimon too is there; mad with despair, he makes an ineffectual attack on his father, and then stabs himself. On hearing this story from the messenger, Kreon's queen Eurydike withdraws and slays herself, and Kreon's house is brought to the dust.

III. *Elektra* (some time between 440 and 412 B.C.).—The plot is essentially the same as that of the *Choephoroi* of Aischylos, excepting that there is no mention of Erinyes pursuing the matricide. The chorus is of sympathising women.

IV. *Oidipus the King* (produced about the beginning of the Archidamian war, 431-421 B.C.).—The subject has been already mentioned in connexion with the *Seven* of Aischylos. The present play begins with a picture of Oidipus' lordship in Thebes. The land is visited by a pestilence, and the Delphian oracle declares that an unknown defiler, who is the cause, must be driven forth. In the pride of his intellect and strength Oidipus sets himself to find the sinner. Teiresias tells him 'thou art the man': in his amazed wrath he accuses of treason both the prophet and Kreon, brother of his queen (and his uncle, though he knows it not). In the dispute with Kreon he learns from Iokaste for the first time that the babe of Laios was exposed on Kithairon and Laios was killed by robbers near Thebes. The suspicion rises in his mind that an old man whom once he slew was Laios himself; then Oidipus, as slayer of a harmless stranger, must be the defiler of the land.

A messenger from Corinth now reports that Polybos is dead and Oidipus elected to his kingdom. Oidipus, who has never doubted that he is the son of Polybos, is now partly freed from the dread of an oracle which told that he should slay his father and wed his mother. To remove this second fear the messenger

tells him he is no son of Merope, but a foundling whom he, the messenger, had brought to Corinth from Kithairon, where he had received him from a shepherd of Laios, who now appears and unwillingly supplies the last link of evidence in the series of horrors. Iokaste, quicker to guess the truth, has already hanged herself: now Oidipus blinds himself, and lies prostrate in utter abasement.

The chorus is of Theban elders, as in the *Antigone*.

V. *Women of Trachis* (perhaps between 420 and 415 B.C.).—To cure her husband of his passion for his captive Iole, Deianeira, wife of Herakles, sends him a robe anointed with the blood of the Centaur Nessos, which had issued from the wound made by the arrow of Herakles, and which before his death he gave to her as a sovereign love-philtre. The poison eating into his flesh, Herakles dies in agony, though not before giving orders for his fire-burial on Mount Oita and bidding his son Hyllos wed Iole; Deianeira has already destroyed herself on learning her mistake.

The chorus is of women of Trachis, where the scene lies.

VI. *Philoktetes* (produced, if we may trust the Scholiast, in 409 B.C.).—Philoktetes, possessor of the bow of Herakles, had been abandoned on Lemnos by the Greeks on their voyage to Troy, because he had been bitten by a serpent in the foot and the festering wound would not heal. But now they find they cannot take Troy without him, and they send Odysseus and Neoptolemos, the young son of Achilleus, to bring him to them —no light task, for he is full of resentment at their desertion of him. Acting on a ruse suggested by Odysseus, Neoptolemos wins his confidence and secures the bow, his sole support; but, moved by his anguish when the truth is revealed, he restores it and prepares to depart. Suddenly the deified Herakles appears, and bids Philoktetes go to Troy, thus forcibly bringing the plot to the traditional conclusion.

The chorus is of sailors.

VII. *Oidipus at Kolonos* (produced, according to tradition, in 401 B.C., five years after Sophokles' death).—The play depicts the last scenes in the life of Oidipus. Years have passed since the revelation in Thebes. At first he had been kept in ward; now he has been cast forth to wander about in blindness and beggary, tended only by his daughter Antigone, and has now arrived at Kolonos, near Athens. His sons Eteokles and Polyneikes have grown to manhood, and quarrelled over their inheritance; Polyneikes is on the march against Thebes, and craves

his father's blessing, only to be driven away with curses. Suffering and years have cleansed away defilement from Oidipus; he is a vessel in the hands of Heaven, and his grave will bring blessing on the land where it shall be. It is to lie in Kolonos. Here Theseus, king of Athens, protects him and his daughters Antigone and Ismene from the attempts of Kreon to carry them back to Thebes; here he is visited by Polyneikes in the vain hope of a blessing; and here he passes away, in transfiguration, not in death, Theseus alone viewing the sacred sight.

The chorus is of elders of Kolonos, the poet's native place.

§ 3. **Euripides.**—Mnesarchos, the father of the poet, was of a respectable, his mother Kleito perhaps even of a noble family. Legend said he was born in 480, on the day of the fight at Salamis, where lay the family estate; and this date, though mythical as regards the day, is probably not far wrong in respect to the year. His wife (for apparently he only married once) seems to have been a certain Melito, daughter of Mnesilochos, and perhaps a relative. The stories of his domestic trouble are probably pure scandal; so is the legend that he was a woman-hater, which arose from the fact that he was the first Greek to make an artistic study of woman as woman.

Though he lived the life of a retired student, the spirit of his age was strong upon him. From the first he was much influenced by the Sophistic movement, which, like the Illumination in modern times, made men see clearly the opposition between traditional theology and common sense, and impressed upon them the right of the individual to confront on all points orthodox opinion with their personal judgment. He shared too, especially in the last years of his life, in the age's spirit of passionate unrest, which, as in France, ripened amid the ruins of empire. As he grew older, he made more and more daring experiments in his art. He tore his passions to tatters. Always fiery and eager, he was now 'mad for the sight of his eyes,' ablaze with fury at the evil of the world around him. Reaping the reward of his bitter tongue, he was forced to quit his beloved Athens,

and lived about a year and a half as a guest at the half-barbarous Macedonian court. He died there, 407-6 B.C.[1]

Unfortunately for himself, Euripides had to put new wine into old bottles. His plots were of necessity taken from traditional cycles in which he nevertheless disbelieved; and his scene was the great Attic theatre as it had been developed to suit the pious pageantry of an Aischylos and the stately refinement of a Sophokles. Euripides, as we have already noticed (ii. § 1), had in many respects far more sympathy with the generation before Aischylos. This was natural. He was usually more interested in working out a character or a situation than in developing an artistic plot; he was fond of occasional archaic turns of expression, though not of the peculiar archaism of Aischylos and his school; he cared little to keep up a uniform level of dignity in style, preferring to vent emotions in Nature's own frank speech; and he had a singular gift for brilliant description and lyrical flights. For all these tendencies he found a field in the simple, loosely-jointed frame of the older drama; and he added that which made his work typical of his own age, filling his scenes with attacks on the real or fancied evils of the day, with covert and overt assaults on theology and theologians, with declamation, and with the discussions of a rationalistic, argumentative, often downright priggish and logic-chopping philosophy. For all his greatness, he could not reconcile these impulses of his age and of his own soul with the given forms of his art: nowhere are to be found such painful disharmonies between form and spirit as in his plays.

Aristotle suggests that the dramatist wishing to write a play on a given legend should put before himself the bald outlines of the action as reported by tradition, and then, assuming the figures to be simply human, should imagine

[1] The best study of Euripides' character will be found in Wilamowitz, *Herakles*, i. p. 1 ff. Dr. Verrall's *Euripides the Rationalist* also is a singularly brilliant and sympathetic study, and, though not on all points carrying conviction, should be read carefully in connection with the *Alkestis*, *Ion*, *Phoenician Women*, and *Iphigeneia in Tauris*.

what would happen under the circumstances.[1] This is exactly what Euripides did, and what his predecessors could not and would not have done. He took the skeleton of tradition, and figured to himself the characters as simply, brutally human. He then worked out the situations arising both from his own conception of the characters and from the requirements of tradition, but especially the former; to the traditional plots he usually adhered, though not without important exceptions. He handled his subject in a most sensational and melodramatic manner: royalties in rags, hysterical passions, domestic trivialities, crowd his stage, on a background of scientific agnosticism. He was forced to bring the play to the traditional conclusion, which very often contradicted the developments of situation and character which were the substance of his play; and he did it in a perfunctory manner, by contemptuously bringing in the *deus ex machina*, some god who is hoisted aloft by a crane and proclaims that this or that must take place, however little it harmonise artistically with what has preceded. With the same palpable insincerity he handles his prologues and episodes of miraculous incidents given by the traditional groundwork of the plot. He seems to be constantly throwing out to his audience hints that he is only half or not at all in earnest, and that he feels these miracles and conventions of tradition to be as harmful to what he deems the true drama, the play of human passions, as they are to thought and morals. This wilful, freakish, passionate mood, this want of harmony between form and spirit, grew on him with years. Of his later plays, there is but one, the *Bacchantes*, in which it is to any large degree overcome; here, doubtless because in Macedonia he had seen real Bacchantes, he depicted the ecstasy of Dionysiac worship in a spirit of supreme artistic conviction, by which for a little while his restless wayward rationalism was overpowered.

Arranged in approximate chronological order, the plays which have come down to us are as follows:—

[1] *Poet.* 17.

I. *Alkestis.*—This play appeared in 438 B.C., together with the *Cretan Women*, the *Alkmeon in Psophis*, and *Telephos*. On the character of this play see above, ii. § 1. The Fates have permitted Admetos of Pherai to escape an impending death if he can find another to die on his behalf. His wife Alkestis consents to take his doom on herself; she rapidly sinks, and to all appearance dies. Before the body has been taken to the vault, the jovial demigod Herakles, a guest-friend (*xenos*) of Admetos, appears and claims of him his wonted hospitality. Admetos from fear of marring his guest's pleasure tells him nothing of his misfortune. But learning it by chance in the midst of his cups Herakles, shocked at having filled a mourning house with sounds of merriment, determines to restore Alkestis. He rushes to the vault, and after a struggle with Death robs him of his prey and brings her back to the world of life and her husband.

II. *Medeia.*—In 431 B.C. this play was brought out with the *Philoktetes*, *Diktys*, and the satyric *Harvesters*. The scene is laid at Corinth. Iason has here deserted Medeia, the witch-princess of Kolchis, who for love of him had worked by her spells his salvation when he came to her father's distant land in search of the Golden Fleece, had fled away with him, had born him two sons—in vain, for he has abandoned her for the daughter of the Corinthian king, who orders her to leave the land. Having obtained a respite of one day, she lays her plans of revenge. She sends her children to offer to the bride a poisoned robe; on their return, as soon as she learns that the gift has worked its deadly end, she slays them and carries off their bodies on her winged dragon-car through the air to Athens, whose king Aigeus has promised her a safe asylum.

III. *Hippolytos Crowned.*—This play was brought out in 428. The subject is the love of Phaidra, the second wife of Theseus king of Athens, for her husband's son Hippolytos. The scene is in Troezen, where Theseus lives in temporary exile. The goddess Aphrodite, wroth with Hippolytos for his exclusive worship of the virgin huntress Artemis, inspires Phaidra with a passion for him. Long she keeps it suppressed; but at last her nurse, seeing her sickening, discovers it, and strives to serve her. Her advances are rudely checked by Hippolytos, and Phaidra in despair hangs herself. Theseus now arriving finds on her corpse a tablet declaring that she has slain herself to escape the unholy pursuit of Hippolytos, and in wild rage banishes his son, laying on him one of the curses which his father, the sea-god Poseidon,

has promised to fulfil for him. And it is now quickly accomplished. As the innocent youth is riding along the coast into exile, a monster arising from the waves scares his horses, and his chariot colliding with a great stone he is caught in the reins and fatally wounded. Before he dies he is brought home, and Artemis, revealing the truth to the conscience-stricken father, reconciles him with his dying son.

IV. *Hekabe.*—The subject is the woes of Hekabe, wife of Priamos of Troy, after the capture of the city by the Greeks. Her daughter Polyxene is sacrificed as a victim to the angry ghost of Achilleus by the conquerors, and her young son Polydoros murdered by the Thracian king Polymestor, to whose care he had been intrusted; but she gains some satisfaction in entrapping the Thracian and blinding him.

V. *Kyklops.*—This is the sole surviving specimen of a satyr-play. A troop of Dionysiac satyroi, headed by old Father Silenos,[1] have by chance come to Sicily, when they become the slaves of the one-eyed monster Kyklops. On the arrival of Odysseus, Silenos sells to him for wine some of his master's sheep and cheeses, but on the appearance of the monster swears they were taken without his consent. The Kyklops now takes possession of Odysseus and his crew, with the intention of eating them. The rest of the plot is as told in the *Odyssey*, *i.* 233 ff. After some of his comrades have been devoured, Odysseus makes drunk and blinds the monster, and finally sails away with the satyroi.

VI. *Children of Herakles* (Herakleidai).—Pursued after their father's death by his old enemy Eurystheus, the children of Herakles seek refuge in Athens under the ward of the king Demophon, who prepares to meet the former in battle, but discovers that the gods demand as a condition of his victory the sacrifice of a noble maid. Makaria, a daughter of Herakles, voluntarily submits to this doom. Aided by Hyllos, the newly arrived eldest son of Herakles, Demophon wins a great victory; Eurystheus is captured and put to death.

VII. *Mad Herakles.*—While Herakles is away toiling in the service of Eurystheus, his earthly father Amphitryon, his wife Megara, and his children fall into the power of Lykos in Thebes,

[1] See above, i. § 7. The combination of the Ionic Silenos with the Doric satyrs is interesting, and shows that the native Silenoi had already ousted the latter in nearly all but name from the satyric chorus.

who threatens them with death. Suddenly the hero returns and slays the tyrant. But now Lyssa, incarnate madness, appears and enters the palace, sent by Hera to stir Herakles to a ghastly deed. In sudden frenzy he murders his children and wife. As on his return to consciousness he lies prostrate in an agony of remorse, he is visited by his friend Theseus of Athens, who leads him away on his supporting arm.

VIII. *Andromache.*—There are grounds for attributing this play to the period 431-421 B.C.; but an exact date can hardly be fixed. The plot is as follows: Neoptolemos of Epeiros, son of Achilleus, has as leman Andromache, formerly wife of Hektor of Troy, who has born him a son. His childless queen Hermione, daughter of Menelaos, plots in his absence at Delphoi to murder her with her child. She is aided by her father; but the plot is foiled by the appearance of Peleus, father of the dead Achilleus. Menelaos slinks away. Hermione, looking forward with terror to the return of Neoptolemos, is suddenly confronted by her cousin Orestes, son of Agamemnon, an old lover. He carries her off to her home, where she is to wed him, promising her that Neoptolemos shall give no trouble; plans have been laid already for his destruction in Delphoi. Almost immediately after their departure a messenger brings the news that Neoptolemos has been murdered in Delphoi at the instigation of Orestes.[1] At the end, Thetis, the goddess-mother of Achilleus, appearing *ex machina*, ordains among other things that Andromache shall wed Helenos, the future ruler of Epeiros.

IX. *Suppliants.*—The subject is the protection given by Athens to the mothers of the Argives who fell before Thebes. Headed by their king Adrastos, they entreat Theseus of Athens to recover and bury their dead. He undertakes the duty, and succeeds. As the corpses are being burned, Euadne, wife of Kapaneus, one of the 'Seven' (see above, § 1), throws herself upon her husband's burning pyre. Then the Argives depart, after making with Athens for all time a compact of offensive and defensive alliance.

There are some grounds for attributing the *Elektra* and *Helene* to about 425 B.C.,[2] while the *Trojan Women*, as well as

[1] The implication is clearly that this deed was already done before Orestes appeared on the scene before the palace of Neoptolemos, and was part of a deliberately arranged plan for the abduction of Hermione, concerted with her disreputable father.

[2] See Zielinski, *Gliederung d altatt. Komödie*, 96 ff.

the lost *Telephos* (416) and *Palamedes* (415), appeared considerably later; further, the *Phoenician Women* may have been older than the *Birds* of Aristophanes (*i. e.* about 415).[1] Ordinarily the *Elektra* is dated after 415, the *Helene* 412, the *Phoenician Women* still later.

X. *Trojan Women.*—After a prologue, in which Poseidon and Athena agree to harry the fleet of the victorious Greeks on their return from Troy, the captive queen Hekabe appears before her fallen city, hearing and seeing the sorrows of Troy and her own kin. Then follows a powerful rhetorical antithesis—Helene pleads in her own defence before Menelaos, appealing to the fatalism of tradition for justification, and Hekabe answers with a rationalistic assault on legend and a circumstantial proof of responsibility, drawing from Menelaos a promise to slay Helene in Argos. As Troy sinks in flames, the play closes.

XI. *Iphigeneia in Tauris.*—Iphigeneia, daughter of Agamemnon, spirited away in Aulis by Artemis from her father's hands when he would have purchased a fair passage to Troy by her sacrifice, has been transported by that goddess to the Tauric peninsula, or Crimea. Here she now serves as priestess in the temple of Artemis, whom the savage natives worship with human victims. She is charged to immolate two Greek strangers who have just arrived. They are her own brother Orestes, wandering about after his matricide and charged by Apollo to steal the Tauric image of Artemis, and his faithful Pylades. An ingeniously contrived recognition follows.[2] They decide on a plan by which all three, with the statue of the goddess, may reach the Greek ship awaiting them. But their ship is driven back upon the coast and recapture seems imminent, when suddenly Athena, appearing *ex machina*, stops the pursuit and announces that the ship has got free again, adding as epilogue instructions to the now far-off Greeks which were the traditional origins of several local Attic cults.

XII. *Ion.*—Ion is the secretly born son of Apollon and Kreusa, daughter of Erechtheus king of Athens. He was exposed at his birth, and carried by Hermes to his father's temple at Delphoi, where he has grown up, in ignorance of his origin, as custodian and attendant of the temple. At the outset of the play Kreusa, since wedded to the foreigner Xuthos, visits the temple with her husband to seek healing of their childless-

[1] See Scholiast to *Birds*, 348.

[2] See Arist. *Poet.* 16.

ness. Xuthos is told by the god that the first person he meets after leaving the seat of the oracle will prove to be his son. He meets Ion, and without hesitation claims him as his child, confirmed by the fact that the finding of Ion as a babe in the temple tallies with a youthful indiscretion which he himself once committed in Bacchic revelry at Delphoi. This story coming to the ears of Kreusa fills her with jealous rage; she confesses her secret to the old *paidagōgos*, the slave 'child-ward' of the family, whom she charges to poison Ion with one of two drops of Gorgon's blood which she carries in a bracelet. The plot is discovered through a dove drinking of Ion's cup and dying at once. Condemned to death, Kreusa seeks refuge at the altar. To avert bloodshed in the holy place, the priestess comes forth to Kreusa and Ion (for Xuthos is not present). She displays to Ion an old cradle with wrappings, embroidered coverings, a golden necklet, and an olive crown, which she says were found with him, and bids him seek his mother. Kreusa at once recognises the things as her own, in which she exposed her babe, and embraces Ion as her son by Apollon. Then Athena appears *ex machina*, confirms their conclusions, and bids them return, without correcting the delusion of Xuthos, to Athens, where Ion is to rule as king and become father of the four Ionic tribes, while of Kreusa and Xuthos shall be born the tribe-heroes of the other Greek races, Doros and Achaios.

XIII. *Elektra*.—This is Euripides' version of the tale told by Aischylos in his *Choephoroi*. Elektra here is wedded by the tyrants to a poor but worthy farmer. He hospitably receives Orestes and Pylades, who after discovering themselves to Elektra lay a plot for the destruction of Aigisthos. They slay him at a sacrifice. Klytaimestra too falls into their clutches; she is lured into Elektra's house by the latter's fiction that she has given birth to a child, and is there murdered. As brother and sister look conscience-stricken upon their deed, the Dioskoroi (Kastor and Polydeukes), the divine brothers of Klytaimestra and Helene, appear. They have no praise for Apollon, who prompted the matricide; but they give some little comfort, ordering that Elektra be wedded to Pylades and Orestes depart on the wanderings of which the end is described in Aischylos' *Eumenides*.

XIV. *Helene*.—The plot is based on an old motive first suggested by Stesichoros, and touched upon by Euripides in his *Elektra*, v. 1280. Helene is in Egypt, whither she was spirited

away by Hera; not she, but a wraith (*eidolon*) of her semblance went with Paris to Troy. But none know this, and all execrate her name. Now Menelaos comes; he has been shipwrecked on the coast, and has left concealed in a cave his comrades and the wraith he has brought back as his wife from Troy. He meets the true Helene, who discovers herself; the reconciliation is completed by the announcement of a messenger that the wraith has flown away, after revealing to his shipmates the truth. But now they are faced by a difficulty: the Egyptian king is pursuing Helene with an unwelcome love. Supported by his sister, the priestess Theonoe, they form a plan to outwit him, by which they obtain a ship and sail away. Then appear the Dioskoroi, *ex machina*, calm the king's fury, and close the play with a few prophecies of archæological interest, as so often happens.

XV. *Phoenician Women*.—The play derives its name from the constitution of its chorus, Phoenician slaves. The subject is that of the *Seven* of Aischylos; but Iokaste is here still living and striving to reconcile her sons, the blinded Oidipus is yet dwelling in Thebes, and another new feature is introduced in the voluntary self-sacrifice of Menoikeus, son of Kreon, whose death the prophet Teiresias has declared to be a necessary condition of success for the Theban arms. In the end Iokaste slays herself upon the death of her sons, and Kreon drives into exile Oidipus with Antigone, who has protested against his denial of burial to Polyneikes and refused wedlock with his son Haimon. The discrepancy with Sophokles' version should be noted.

XVI. *Orestes* (408 B.C.).—Yet another version of Orestes' troubles after the slaughter of his mother. Temporarily relieved from the pursuit of the Eumenides, he lies in Argos awaiting his fate. The arrival of his uncle Menelaos gives him some hope; he vigorously defends his act against the accusations of Klytaimestra's father Tyndareos. But Menelaos palters and shuffles out of responsibility. Orestes goes to face the Argive tribunal, which condemns him and Elektra to death. Orestes and Pylades decide to avenge themselves on Menelaos by storming his palace, slaying Helene, and holding their daughter Hermione as a hostage; Helene is however miraculously hidden from them. Orestes calls on Menelaos to reverse his condemnation if he would have his daughter live. Then Apollon appears *ex machina*, shews that Helene has not been slain but raised to

heaven, and prescribes his future course to Orestes—a year to be spent in Arkadia, followed by a judgment and acquittal in Athens—after which he is to rule as king in Argos, wedded to Hermione,[1] while Pylades is to marry Elektra. The old commentator with considerable justice remarks: 'the play is somewhat comic in its climax . . . it is extremely bad in character-painting, for all the persons except Pylades are contemptible'; but that is exactly what Euripides aimed at.

XVII. *Iphigeneia in Aulis.*—The plot hinges upon the sacrifice by Agamemnon of his daughter Iphigeneia to appease the wrath of Artemis and so secure a fair passage to Troy. He decoys Klytaimestra and Iphigeneia to Aulis by letters announcing his intention to marry the latter to Achilleus. The king's guile is speedily made manifest. But resistance is fruitless; the sacrifice is prepared. The goddess however saves the maiden by carrying her away to Tauris, leaving a hind in her place.

The play bears at the end traces of a second hand, who has recast it; but the date of this redaction is uncertain. It may have been fairly ancient.

XVIII. *Bacchantes* (produced after the author's death, with the *Alkmeon in Corinth*, in 407 B.C.).—The god Dionysos, accompanied by swarms of Asiatic Bacchantes (the chorus), has returned to Thebes, the home of his mortal mother Semele, who was consumed in the fiery epiphany of Zeus, which she had foolishly craved to see as reward of her love. The contagion of the new religion spreads among the Theban women; Kadmos, father of Semele, and the blind Teiresias too become converts. The young king Pentheus—whose mother Agaue was sister of Semele—is horrified at its impropriety and orders its suppression. The god allows himself to be caught and led before Pentheus, his captors not knowing his divinity. Cast into prison, he miraculously releases himself and faces the amazed king, whom he promises to lead alone to view the orgies of his womenfolk on the hillside. Dressed in Bacchic woman's robes, the king departs spellbound with his mysterious guide. When they reach the Bacchic rout, Dionysos inspires the women with fury against Pentheus; they drag down the tree on which he has taken refuge and tear him to pieces, his mother Agaue being foremost in the deed. Now Agaue appears on the scene, in her madness exhibiting her son's head as that of a lion. Her frenzy

[1] In this account she does not marry Neoptolemos at all, unlike the legend of the *Andromache*.

is gradually dispelled by the words of Kadmos. Then Dionysos appears, this time in manifest divinity, to ordain the sojourn of Kadmos in Illyria and the exile of Agaue. A considerable number of verses have been lost from his speech.

XIX. *Rhesos.*—This play was already in antiquity regarded by some as spurious, and most modern critics agree in this view; some however consider it a juvenile work. It has, as the Scholiast remarks, a Sophoklean character, and slight merit; probably it should be assigned to the fourth century. It depicts the slaying of the Thracian prince Rhesos, son of the river-god Strymon and the Muse Terpsichore, by Odysseus and Diomedes in their reconnaissance of the Trojan camp described in the tenth book of the *Iliad.*

Of late the fragments of Euripides have received considerable study. Beside the collection in Nauck's *Fragmenta Tragicorum Graecorum,* special attention should be called to Blass, *De Phaethontis Euripidis Fragmentis Claromontanis,* Kiel, 1885 (and Wilamowitz, *Hermes,* xviii. 396), to Weil, *Nouveaux Fragments d'Euripide,* Paris, 1879 (Blass, *Rhein. Museum,* xxxv. 74, and Wecklein, *Philologus,* xxxix. 406), and to the newly found fragments of the *Antiope,* first published in *Hermathena,* viii. 38 (*Classical Review,* v. 123 ff., 185, 232, 401 ff.).

§ 4. **Contemporaries.**—To attempt an estimate of the contemporaries of the three great tragedians is almost like writing a criticism of the Elizabethan poets on the sole basis of the *Return from Parnassus.* The sources of our knowledge are vague literary traditions, the jokes of the comic poets, and a few fragments.[1]

The most important names are Polyphradmon, son of Phrynichos, and Aristias, son of Pratinas; Euphorion the son and Philokles the nephew of Aischylos; Neophron, Aristarchos, Ion, Achaios; Melanthios and Morsimos, the latter a son of Philokles[2]; Ariston and Iophon, sons of Sophokles; Akestor, Pythangelos, Meletos, the accuser of Sokrates; Agathon, Nikomachos, Sthenelos, Xenokles and his son Karkinos, Kleophon, and the notorious oligarch

[1] Collected by Nauck, *Frag. Trag. Graec.*

[2] The evidence that Melanthios and Morsimos were brothers is insufficient; see Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*[2], xxxiii. *n.*

Kritias. The most interesting personality is that of Agathon. A man of singular beauty, charm, and talent, he was, in his peculiar way, one of the most original writers of the waning fifth century. Even for his age the subtlety of his epigrammatic phrases and the languishing *abandon* of his lyrical metres—in short, his genial preciosity—were remarkable. One of his plays, *The Flower*, had a perfectly original plot; but the innovation was too daring to command imitation.

CHAPTER IV

The Old Comedy and its Origins

§ 1. **The Doric Farce.**—We have already (i. §§ 2, 7) sketched the development of this performance from that of the Peloponnesian mummers. The earliest actors probably wore the phallos and comic human masks; they were also padded over the haunches and stomach.[1] Their entertainment, arising out of the Dionysiac performances of combined song, dance, and speech, was a series of farcical scenes in which the circumstances of daily life and the stories of religious or heroic legend were caricatured. The Bacchic spirit of wild fun did not spare even the noblest and holiest figures of native belief; no subject was more keenly relished than a 'Comic History of the Gods,' especially scenes in which Herakles could appear as a drunkard or glutton, brawling, clumsily swindling, or robbed of his beloved pea-soup. From the parody of daily life some of the stock characters are known, such as the fruit-stealer, the foreign doctor, the gallant, the bawd, the drunkard. A few names are preserved—as Myllos, the squinter or *roué*; Maison, at first the glutton, later the cook; Tettix the harlequin; Pappos the old pantaloon; Akko and Makko, the silly old women, and the thumbling Sannoros, a figure of the Italiote stage.[2]

[1] See *Annali dell' Inst.*, 1885, pl. D; *Ath. Mittheil.* xiii. pl. 11; *Archäol. Anzeiger*, 1895, p. 36; *Journ. of Hellenic Studies*, xiii. pl. 4.

[2] Charinos, the Harlequin or Gracioso of the Lakonian *deikēliktai* (Plut. *Agesil.* 21. 2, 212 F; Athenaios, 621 E), appears from Assteas' vase to have been something like a Harpagon in Italy.

This type of comedy reached its highest perfection in the hands of Epicharmos of Kos (born about 540 B.C.), who seemingly introduced into it much of the sententiousness of the later Ionic recitative poetry, and something of its formal refinement; but it was still a series of loosely connected burlesque scenes, in which probably there was no chorus, the actors singing and dancing themselves if necessary. Like the rest, he parodied myth, as in the *Hephaistos*, where Hera is punished for her ill-treatment of Herakles by being bound to her chair, or the *Busiris*, in which Herakles after slaying the Oriental tyrant holds revel in his larder; or else he drew comic pictures of daily life, caricaturing the Country Cousin, the Parasite, and the speculative thinkers or disputants of his age.

Two other writers of this comedy, a predecessor Phormis and a successor Deinolochos, are mentioned; our literary knowledge of them ends with their names.

A development of this type of comedy was the *Mimos* or 'imitation' of a single humorous scene or personality, of which the most successful writer was Sophron, who flourished some time about the middle of the fifth century. He wrote in Doric prose, dispensing with both chorus and plot. Seemingly his son (?) Xenarchos followed in his footsteps. Besides the traces of Sophronic influence in the Bucolic poetry of Theokritos (third century), a decidedly successful attempt to treat the Mimos metrically was made by Herodas, whose *Mimiamboi* (mimes composed in iambic *skazontes*) have recently been recovered from the Egyptian sands.

§ 2. **The Phlyakes.**—After Epicharmos, the greatest writer of Doric comedy was Rhinthon of Taras (Tarentum), who flourished about 300 B.C. The Doric farce in the Greek states of Italy was seemingly called *Phlyakes*, which is strictly a name of the nature-spirits connected in the Peloponnesos with the worship of Dionysos (see i. § 16), who were originally represented by the clowns of Doric comedy. Hence these clowns in Italy bore the

name of Phlyakes. Now Rhinthon took the bold step of using these comic figures to parody a special form of myth, the myth as it had been treated in the later Attic tragedy,

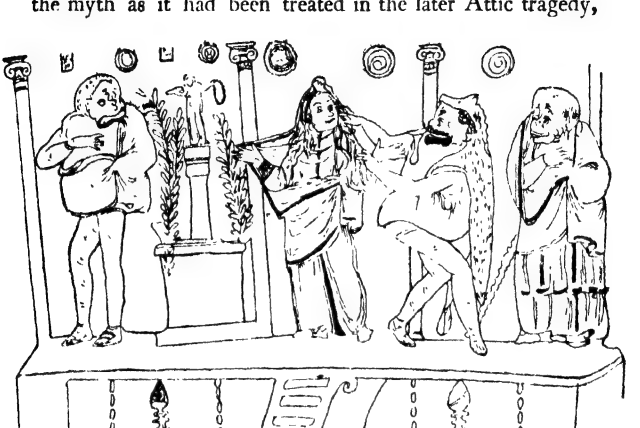


FIG. 3.—SCENE FROM THE PHLYAKES

especially the tragedy of Euripides. This is the *hilarotragōidiā* of Rhinthon, whose plays, whether of this kind or of the older type,[1] are generally called 'Phlyakes.' Other writers of phlyakes were Blaisos, Sopatros, and Skiros.[2]

§ 3. **Old Attic Comedy.**—Above (i. § 2) we spoke of masquerades in which the performers, though dressed in costumes of birds or beasts, did not play a dramatic *rôle* as

[1] This older type it probably was which lived on in Italy under the name *magōidiā* (Athen. 621).

[2] A collection of vase-pictures of phlyakes is given by Heydemann in vol. i. (1886) of the *Archäol. Jahrbuch*. Compare, too, Dörpfeld-Reisch, *Griech. Theater*, 318 ff.; *Journ. Hell. Stud.*, 1887, p. 51.

either birds or beasts, but preserved their characters as men. Sometimes these performances meet us as organised ballets known by the names of animals, sometimes in the simpler form of processions of phallos-bearers dancing and singing wanton Dionysiac songs. Of the latter order is the old Attic *Kōmos*. The Komos is the parent of the chorus in Old Comedy; the comedy arose when to the Komos were added actors.

The Komoi were probably organised to a certain extent before the beginning of the fifth century. Even before 500 B.C. shows of this kind were held at the festival of the Lenaia in the month Gamelion (nearly our January).[1] The place where they were held was seemingly the old *orchestra* on the western slope of the Akropolis, between it, the Pnyx, and the Areopagos, in a tract called from its low level *Limnai*, 'the Marshes.' Here was the old temple of Dionysos 'in the Marshes,' and by it the sacred winepress; hence the contest of Komoi held here was known as the 'competition by the place of the winepress' (ὁ ἐπὶ Ληναίῳ ἀγών). Early in the fifth century these shows were probably removed to the great theatre of Dionysos Eleuthereus on the south-eastern slope of the Akropolis, though the old name of the competition continued.[2] The Lenaia were long felt to be the home of comedy, as the Great Dionysia, held two months later in the year, were regarded as the seat of tragedy.[3]

What these Komoi looked like is shown by archaic vases in Berlin (nn. 1830 and 1697[4]), London (*Journ. Hellen. Studies*, ii. 309, pl. xiv.), and Boston (n. 372). The first and third show a troop of men fantastically dressed as birds,

[1] I regret I cannot agree with those who identify the Lenaia with the Anthesteria.

[2] See Dörpfeld's article, *Ath. Mittheil.* xx., and Körte, *Rhein. Museum*, 1897.

[3] See Bethe, *Prolegomena z. Gesch. d. Theaters*, c. i.

[4] First published by Poppelreuter, *De Comoediae Atticae Primordiis*, Dissert. Berlin, 1893.

and without masks (Figs. 4 and 5); the second represents a partly masked chorus of horses and horsemen (Fig. 6);

FIG. 4.—A KOMOS (*from a Vase-Painting*).

the fourth, six armed men riding on dolphins, etc. A flute-player is constantly present. Apparently such troops

FIG. 5.—A KOMOS (*from a Vase-Painting*).

might be either masked or not; the mask only became obligatory when they were joined by a masked actor.

This addition of an actor constituted Comedy. But the actors are not, like the chorus, native to Attica. They

have the padding, the phallos, the clowns' masks, the coarse flesh-coloured or striped tights, the short jacket and cloak

FIG. 6 —A KOMOS (*from a Vase-Painting*).

of the players in Rhinthon's phlyakes. They are Dorian clowns.[1]

FIG. 7.—ACTOR OF ATTIC COMEDY (*from a Terra-Cotta*).

FIG. 8.—ACTOR OF PHLYAKES (*from a Vase-Painting*).

[1] See Körte, *Archäol. Jahrbuch*, 1893, 61 ff.

This explains the old legend which attributed the 'invention' of Attic comedy to the Megarians, and to the Megarian Susarion in particular. It is true in part; the actors were originally from the northern Peloponnesos.

When did these two elements fuse together? Probably not long after the Persian wars, if not earlier; for the exhibitions of Chionides are dated 487 B.C. by Suidas, and the combination must have been tolerably complete when about 465 B.C. its resultant, Comedy, was admitted to take part in the Great Dionysia, although its real home was long felt to be in the Lenaia.[1]

§ 3. **Its Organic Growth.**—The structure of Old Comedy is far more complicated than that of Tragedy. A tragedy is a series of *epeisodia*, *i.e.* of whole indivisible scenes, each followed by choral songs consisting of unbroken sequences of strophes, antistrophes, and epodes; each of these three sections was usually sung by the *whole* chorus of twelve or fifteen, except when the choral part was capable of being represented by an *actor*, in which case it might be taken by a single chorus-singer.[2] But Comedy is based on a double, not a single performance. Its choral parts are founded on the counter-song of two choirs of twelve each. Except during the departure of the chorus, the whole troop of twenty-four never sang together; half-choruses of twelve sang in mutual responsion the purely lyrical portions (*ōidē*, answered by *antōidē*), while the leaders of the half-choruses sang the non-lyrical, generally personal parts of the chorus' *rôle* (*epirrhēma*, answered by *antepirrhēma*).[3] This rule is not made void by the fact that

[1] Tradition spoke of Euetes, Euxenides, and Myllos as comedians in Athens contemporary with Epicharmos. Myllos, if he was not mythical, got his name from his stock *rôle* (above, § 1); then he, and probably the other two, were players of Dorian farce in Athens, and are to be classed with Susarion.

[2] See Zielinski, *Gliederung d. altattischen Komödie*, 191 ff., 260 ff., for this and much that follows.

[3] Tragedy sometimes has a second, or more strictly secondary, chorus alternating with the leading one, as Aisch. *Suppl.* 1018 ff., *Eum. fin.*, *Sept. fin.* But the primary chorus is never halved.

in the *Ekklesiazusai* and *Plutos* of Aristophanes it is not observed,[1] for neither belongs to Old Comedy.

Another feature showing the foundation of Comedy is what, following Zielinski, we may call the *Agōn*, or contest. At a certain point the action halts, and the thought which inspired it finds expression in words—in the form of an argument between two persons representing two sides, usually of political faith. Only three plays of Aristophanes, the *Peace*, *Acharnians*, and *Thesmophoriazusai*, are without an *agon*; and this is probably because they are 'second editions,' and were perhaps published in this form without being acted.[2]

The skeleton of Old Comedy is then as follows. After the prologue (a later addition) comes (1) the *parodos* (literally 'entrance'), which extends over the whole performance of the entering chorus and the actors associated with them until (2, 3) the *agon* and *parabasis*, the latter of which, as a rule, begins with some verses in which it speaks in the part or on behalf of the author, and expounds to the audience his political and literary views. Short single scenes are inserted in this outline up to the *parabasis* and *agon*, sometimes later too. After *agon* and *parabasis* follow (4) either scene-pairs or *epeisodia* (see above) or both; the former may appear between *agon* and *parabasis*, sometimes even earlier, but the latter are never inserted till after the *parabasis*, and hence they cannot appear earlier than between *parabasis* and *agon*. Then follows (5) the *exodos*, or final scene, in which the performers leave the orchestra amid choral *tutti*.[3]

This complicated structure grew up from a simple origin. At first there was nothing but the native choruses or Komoi.

[1] In both there is now only a single half-chorus: in the former all sing, in the latter only the leader.

[2] I have serious doubts about Zielinski's view that the *Peace* in its second version was not really a comedy, but a dedicatory play. See v. § 1.

[3] On these see Poppelreuter, *ut sup.*

Each seemingly consisted of two troops of twelve apiece, which 'chaffed' one another and the public in alternate song accompanied by dancing. Then actors were brought in who played odd scenes of Doric farce, or interludes, at intervals between the songs. The *parabasis* was at the beginning of this stage probably a kind of prologue to the whole performance. The next great step was to connect the whole together by a plot like that of tragedy[1]; but this idea, which would have made the interludes into regular organic scenes, was seldom completely carried out. Usually the plot was worked out before the *parabasis*, and there practically ended; the play now broke up into a series of scenes very loosely connected with one another and the preceding plot.[2] Meanwhile the spirit which had led to the use of two rival choruses came to influence the actors, and the argument of the *agon* arose, in which the chorus also took part, cheering the disputants on, and pronouncing the verdict; furthermore, the scenes were sometimes paired, like the divisions of choral song, and from the analogy of tragedy *epeisodia* and prologues came in.

Of the oldest recorded poets of Old Comedy, Chionides, Ekphantides, and Magnes, we know practically nothing. But Kratinos, the great master before Aristophanes, is distinctly reported to have moved on the lines which we have indicated. He brought the confusion of his predecessor's work into something like order, making it a rule that not more than three actors should be on the scene at once, and inventing brilliant plots, which however broke up after the *parabasis*. Above all, he systematised the random wit of the comedy into a sort of political propaganda.

§ 4. **Its Tone.**—Old Comedy is the Mi-Carême of the Athenian spirit. It lives and breathes in the mad air of the

[1] The poet chiefly responsible for this change would seem to be Krates, if we can trust Aristotle, *Poet.* 5.

[2] Only in four plays of Aristophanes (*Knights*, *Clouds*, *Lysistrate*, *Thesmophoriazusai*) is the plot consistently carried through to the end. See Poppelreuter, *ut sup.*

Bacchic festivals, in which pious sobriety would have been an impious intruder. Its world is one where everything is upside down, where nobility masquerades as comical roguery, and enthroned apes grin down upon grovelling heroes.

Yet there was much method in its madness. The poets had a purpose, like every Greek worthy of the name; their fantastic mirth is often a mask for political earnestness. They were generally a literary 'set,' strongly conservative in tone; and usually their wildest jests were deliberately fired at a political target. In the Dionysiac orchestra everybody was a coward, a liar, a knave, a profligate; but only political opponents are consistently this, only against them are the shafts of ridicule dipped in gall. To discredit them by merciless parody or travesty, by half-truths swollen in comic exaggeration out of all proportion, was the aim of these poet-politicians. But it was not their only aim; for they were poets too, whose vein of riotous fantasy or lyrical lightheartedness could not be limited to the furtherance of a one-sided propaganda.

The plots of comedy found place for the Komoi, which we have seen above (§ 2) to be older by generations than comedy itself. The bird-choruses reappear in the *Birds* of Aristophanes, the horsemen and horses in his *Knights*; the dolphins perhaps were seen again in the *Fish* of Archippos. But the fancy of the poets was far too fertile to be limited to such conceptions as these, which mainly belonged to the realm of fairy-tale or fable. This element of fable was undoubtedly strong in the earlier poets, especially in Magnes, Krates, and Pherekrates. It often admitted of a general political 'purpose'; a poet's description of the Golden Age, when wine ran in the brooks, cakes squabbled round men's heads to be eaten, fishes followed them home, baked themselves, and served themselves up at table, and streams of soup flowed through the gutters,[1] not seldom suggested a humorous contrast with the troubles

[1] See on this whole question Zielinski, *Märchenkomödie*, St. Petersburg, 1885.

of the present; and Aristophanes' fable-play, the *Birds*, was well calculated to remind the Athenians, in its generalities, of their recklessness and too ready credulity. But the innate genius of the comedy was not realised until it turned to plots of relative actuality and to personality, bringing into the orchestra not only freely invented comic figures of a comparative realism, but bold travesties of statesmen, poets, thinkers, and well-known men in general.[1] This tone to a certain extent recalls Archilochos, and is typically Ionic. Probably it was Kratinos who made it at home in the comic orchestra; he certainly composed an *Archilochos* that seemingly contained an *agon* between Archilochos and Homer, in which, according to an ingenious conjecture, the latter typified the alien composition of mythological and social satire as expressed in the Dorian comedy, while the former impersonated the true Ionic spirit of political personality.[2]

The gigantic indecency of Old Comedy is thoroughly in tone with its occasion, the festival; every student of the Greek vases understands its relation to Dionysiac worship. It is not surprising that a people which in its soberest moments saw no shame in nakedness, and frankly put the claims of the flesh on a level with those of the spirit should in the ecstasy of Bacchic devotion have felt this titanic wantonness to be appropriate, indeed necessary, to the occasion.

[1] The law τοῦ μὴ ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν, probably passed about 404 B.C., simply forbade direct travesty of living persons by making them *dramatis personæ*; it left scope however for less direct assaults.

[2] Zielinski, *Gliederung*, 240 f. It should be remembered that Homer was believed to have written the *Margites*, a poetical satire (in the modern sense) or humorous character-study. Compare Arist. *Poet.* 8.

CHAPTER V

Aristophanes and his Contemporaries

§ 1. **Works.**—The ancients regarded Aristophanes as the unsurpassed master of Old Comedy, and from this verdict we have no reason to dissent. There have been wits of more delicate refinement, but there have been none uniting so many of the qualities of the great dramatic humorist.

A comedy of Aristophanes has of course a 'purpose.' Its plot is usually so constructed as to admit either of a complete travesty or at least of a vigorous assault on the persons and tendencies that on social and political grounds he hated. Like his brother comedians, he is above everything a partisan, a conservative who thinks lovingly of the good old days which trained to naïve obedience of venerable tradition, to chastity —as a Greek understood the word—to intellectual honesty and simplicity, and to social and political moderation; he furiously hates, or claims to hate, his innovating age of empire-seeking expansion and of restless doubt and heresy in all spheres of thought and action. By bold caricature, witty parody, drastic travesty, and not seldom brutal misrepresentation, he, like his compeers, uses the opportunities of the Dionysiac festival to spread his doctrines with the sword of ridicule.

But he was much more than a witty propagandist and a master of brilliant style. He was a poet of singularly fine susceptibility, a lyrist of rare grace. Time after time in his plays the tones of comedy, the bitter sneer of calculating malice and the jolly laughter of vagrant fancy, suddenly melt away into strains of lyric rapture almost startling in their

unexpected sweetness; and then as speedily the comedy begins anew.

Very striking too is the boldness of his imagination. He shifts his scene from Athens to Olympos; he carries his audience into the realm of Hades or the home of the Birds between heaven and earth. The parody of divine figures which was traditional in Old Comedy reaches its climax with him; no god is spared. But most remarkable of all is the plastic power of his fancy. We saw how he took over the traditional choruses of horsemen, horses, birds (iv. §§ 2, 4). But this did not suffice him. Abstractions that his imagination seized on were forthwith embodied in personal form and given fitting utterance. As Aischylos from crude legends created the Erinyes, so Aristophanes created his chorus of Clouds, whose introductory song almost rivals Shelley's 'Cloud.' Ideas that with poets of lesser fancy would have remained ideas take concrete form in figures and scenes of Rabelaisian vigour; indeed Aristophanes combined the most striking qualities of the curé of Meudon and of Mr. Gilbert with a grace that was peculiarly Attic and a dramatic power that was all his own.

As we might have guessed from the date of his life, Aristophanes is not only a master of Old Comedy, but one of the first of the school which we usually call by the comparatively late name 'Middle Comedy.' This will be discussed further below (vii. § 2); here a few words must suffice in order to explain its origin. Her strength crippled, her imperial spirit broken, Athens at the end of the disastrous Peloponnesian war (431-404 B.C.) was no longer the Athens of Perikles. Not merely had the wealth vanished that should have equipped the dramatic stage with its old pageantry,[1] but the proud heart of the nation was bowed which alone had made possible the audacity of the Old Comedy. So two changes befell comedy: outwardly it was simplified, its choruses and scenic outfit becoming more and more exiguous,[2] and internally its bold tone of personality and its uproarious

[1] See below, vi. § 4 (3). [2] See below, viii. § 4.

fun made way for harmless parody and ridicule of classes and types. Of course the change was not immediate. The way had been partly paved already in the palmy days of Old Comedy, and much that is called characteristic of Middle Comedy—ridicule of social types, and literary criticism—existed long before on the Doric stage[1]; nor did the tendency to use personalities quite die out for many years (see vii. § 2). But for Athens the change is marked; and we do well to put the *Frogs*, *Ekklesiazusai*, and *Plutos* in a class apart from the earlier plays of Aristophanes. The first of these indeed is in outer form like the earlier plays, and especially the *Lysistrate* and *Thesmophoriazusai*; it has moreover a complete *parabasis* and an *agon*,[2] which in the case of the *Thesmophoriazusai* has been obscured by the revision. But the *Ekklesiazusai* and *Plutos*, though they have an *agon*, have no *parabasis*; they belong definitively to the Middle Comedy.

Aristophanes was born in the parish of Kydathene. There was some doubt as to the origin of his father Philippos, and hence an accusation of fraudulently using the privileges of the full burgess was made against him by Kleon, the head of the democratic party of expansion and his bitterest and most fiercely attacked opponent. Apparently it failed. His first production was the *Banqueters*, brought out at the Lenaia of 427 B.C.[3]; his *Babylonians* appeared at the Dionysia of 426, his *Acharnians*[4] and *Knights* at the Lenaia respectively of 425 and 424. The first version of the *Thesmophoriazusai* is thought to have appeared at the Dionysia of 424, and the *Clouds* came out in its original form at the same festival in 423. The *Wasps* appeared at the Lenaia of 422, the first edition of the *Peace* at the Dionysia

[1] Above, iv. § 1.

[2] See iv. § 3.

[3] The three first plays were not brought out under the poet's own name; his friend Kallistratos was nominally responsible for the authorship.

[4] This was probably a first edition. Whether the second edition which we have was ever staged at all is uncertain; possibly those of the *Thesmophoriazusai* and *Clouds* were not staged either.

of the same year; the present version of the latter was made public—in what mode is not clear—several months after Kleon's death, which happened late in the summer of 422. The *Birds* came out at the Dionysia 414; in 411 appeared the *Lysistrate* (at the Lenaia) and the second version of the *Thesmophoriazusai*. The first edition of the *Plutos* was acted in 408. The *Frogs* appeared in 405; it has been conjectured that the play was first brought out at the Lenaia, and then slightly altered for the Dionysia of the same year. The *Ekklesiazusai* was produced either in 392 or 389, the second *Plutos* in 388 at the Dionysia, not long before the death of the poet. In all cases where two versions appeared the second has alone survived. When the *Acharnians* and *Clouds* were published in their present form is quite uncertain.

The following is a summary of the plays of Aristophanes in their present form. The chief authority for their analysis and the reconstruction of the first versions is still Zielinski, *Gliederung der altattischen Komödie*:—

I. *Acharnians*.—The annual invasion of Attica at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war drove the farmers to take refuge within the walls of Athens, where their condition was pitiable. One of these is the hero of our play, Dikaiopolis, who in the first scene appears waiting impatiently for the business of the Assembly in the Pnyx to begin. He voices the conservatives' discontent with the war. At last the meeting begins. The demigod Amphitheos offers his services to negotiate a peace; the magistrates brusquely eject him. Next come forward a pair of Athenian ambassadors, much fatigued with the luxury of their judiciously prolonged mission to the court of Persia; they have brought back an emissary of the Great King, the 'King's Eye,' whose inability to speak Greek allows any construction to be put on his words that his conductors please. Dikaiopolis in a fury calls Amphitheos aside and hires him with a fee of eight drachmas to make a private peace with Sparta for himself, his wife, and his family. The next business of the meeting is to hear an ambassador from the Thracian king Sitalkes; this noble savage, he says, has concluded an offensive alliance with Athens and sent specimens of his troops, who immediately steal the garlic which Dikaiopolis

has brought for his lunch. Dikaiopolis now dissolves the assembly by testifying to a *diosēmiā* or omen; he has felt a drop of rain.

Amphitheos returns with Dikaiopolis' private peace; he has been pursued by the men of Acharnai, vehement advocates of war. They, in the form of a chorus, fall upon Dikaiopolis as he goes in procession with his wife, daughter, and slave to hold once again rustic Bacchic revels on his farm. However he forces them to promise him a fair hearing by seizing and threatening to murder one of their darlings—a charcoal basket, for the Acharnians did a large business in charcoal.[1] He now pays a visit to Euripides, who lends him the beggar's garb and equipment of his ragged hero Telephos.[2] Armed with these and the spirit of Euripides, he returns to plead his cause. He proves the war to have been started by Perikles on account of three wenches. The chorus is only half convinced, and Lamachos, the ambitious general and partisan of the war policy, walks in. But after being outrageously chaffed and abused for his politics of self-interest he leaves the scene in the sulks, and Dikaiopolis proclaims a free market with himself for the Spartans and their allies.

The *parabasis* follows, and then a series of scenes in Dikaiopolis' market. A starving Megarian comes in and sells his daughters as pigs; an informer interfering in the transaction is ejected; a Theban sells Boiotian produce for a fine specimen of the Attic informer, to be exhibited at home; another informer gets his deserts; and Dikaiopolis prepares a feast, amid repeated requests for a few drops of his 'Balsam of Peace.' A duet takes place, Dikaiopolis preparing for a banquet and Lamachos for a winter expedition; and the play closes with another duet, in which Lamachos, returning wounded from the wars, bemoans his hard fate, while Dikaiopolis, coming home with an escort of girls from his feast, revels in his happiness.

The background consists of three 'houses': one (that of Euripides) fronts the audience, while the other two (those of Dikaiopolis and Lamachos) face one another, standing to the right and left of the first (below, vi. § 2).

II. *Knights*.—The old man Demos, typifying the Athenian

[1] This is a parody of Euripides' *Telephos*, in which Telephos secures the protection of Agamemnon by threatening to stab the young Orestes. Compare too Euripides' *Orestes* (above, iii. § 3) and Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusai*.

[2] Euripides appears on the *ekkyklema*, on which see below, vi. § 3.

Commonwealth (*dēmos*), is served by three slaves, one representing Nikias (the leader of the conservative party of peace), another Demosthenes, a distinguished general, and the third—here called 'the Paphlagonian'—the democratic and bellicose Kleon. The Paphlagonian cozens old Demos, works on his prejudices and superstitions, draws illicit profit from his position, and makes life unbearable for his fellow-slaves. The latter, to avenge themselves, steal his stock-in-trade of oracles, and find written therein that the leather-seller—Kleon possessed a tannery—will be ousted from Demos' favour by a sausage-seller. Agorakritos, a gentleman of the latter profession, now appears; as he is a low blackguard, he seems singularly fit to overthrow the Paphlagonian and take his place in the confidence of Demos. Assailed by the Paphlagonian, a chorus of knights—the young gentry, strongly conservative in tone—come to his aid. A subordinate *agon* follows—a duet of bragging, mutual abuse, and accusation between the sausage-seller and the Paphlagonian, in which the latter is shouted down. The *parabasis* ensues, and then comes the chief *agon*, in which Demos, emerging from his house, sits as judge. Both the Paphlagonian and the sausage-seller protest their affection for Demos in terms of the kitchen; and the latter vigorously attacks the former's treatment of his master, supporting his eloquence by the gift of a cushion, a pair of shoes, a waistcoat, a box of ointment, and a hare's scut. Outbidden and ordered to surrender his seal of stewardship, the Paphlagonian brings out his oracles; but here too he is outdone by his rival, who has a bigger load of more promising prophecies. Each tries to surpass the other in feeding Demos; but the sausage-seller wins in the contest by stealing the other's hare-pie and presenting it as his own. Their chests are now examined, and that of the Paphlagonian is found full of dainties embezzled from Demos. The Paphlagonian now discovers that his rival is spoken of in one of his oracles, and in despair gives up the contest. Now Agorakritos 'boils down' Demos, as Medeia did Aison, restoring him to youth. Demos is revealed on the Akropolis, no longer in senile devotion to law-court interests, but young and majestic as in the days of Marathon, at peace with all Greece, and determined to suppress the political existence of Kleon and his school.

III. *Clouds*.—Strepsiades, a farmer of the old school, cannot sleep for thinking of the debts brought on him by the extravagance of his high-born wife and his horsy son Pheidippides.

The idea strikes him of sending the lad to the 'Reflectory' (*phrontistērion*) or school of Sokrates, who is (most falsely) caricatured as a professor of godless physics and the rhetorical art of proving black white, so that he may learn to disprove the existence of his father's debts; but Pheidippides refuses to become one of that hungry bilious crew. The old man decides to go himself, and is admitted by a gossiping disciple into the court of the school, where amidst his scholars is seen the master, Sokrates, hanging in mid-air in a basket—to raise the intellect in its supramundane studies above the attraction of the earth, as he explains. He agrees to initiate Strepsiades into the mysteries of the Clouds, who with Sky and Tongue are the only deities of his school. In answer to his invocation they enter (as chorus), wearing long cloaks and enormous noses to their masks, while Sokrates explains that they are the source of captious sophistry and poetical claptrap, as well as of thunder, lightning, and rain. They promise Strepsiades the forensic gift he craves if he will become studious and forego the wholesome pleasures and refinements of life, like Sokrates. After an unsatisfactory preliminary examination, Sokrates leads him into the interior of his school.

The *parabasis* having been sung, Sokrates returns, impatient of his new pupil's stupidity and bad memory. He resumes his examination, and bids him sit on a couch and enwrap himself in an unsavoury rug, there to excogitate ideas on his business. His answers are unsatisfactory; he is unfit for the school. The chorus suggest he should send his son. Accordingly he brings him, considerably against the young man's will. Now is played an interlude between personifications of the Fair and the Unfair Plea, contending as it were for the soul of Pheidippides. The former dilates on the healthy, sober, manly tone of old-fashioned training; the latter points out the small profit of such a clean life, and promises immunity for all profligacy.

Pheidippides comes out of the school a finished scholar and bilious logic-chopper, much to his father's delight. But (after a pair of scenes in which the old man's newly gathered scraps of wisdom are utilised to scare off two creditors) Strepsiades cuts his fingers with his own tool. In a squabble Pheidippides thrashes him and plausibly justifies the act, promising however as a consolation to beat his mother as well. Strepsiades in despair asks the Clouds why they have brought him into this plight; they reply that it is their wont to lead into ruin the evil-minded, so as to instil fear of the gods. To avenge himself

on his teacher, he, with a slave, fires the school with a torch and mattock, and as Sokrates with his scholars rushes out he tells them he is punishing their impiety.

The play in this form is very unlike the *Clouds* of 423; it has been recast under the influence of an increasing hatred and dread of Sokrates. In the first edition Sokrates figured as a harmless quack, who, without any fees, successfully trained Strepsiades for some not very serious rogueries; in the latter his influence is described as pernicious to the State. The training of Pheidippides, unknown to the first *Clouds*, was brought into the second edition to support the general contention that 'Sokrates corrupts the youth'; and the leading *agon* and following scenes, except those with the creditors, are strictly connected with this idea.

The scene must have consisted of two *skenai* at right angles to one another. If Strepsiades, with his son and slaves, was exhibited in his bedroom by means of the *ekkyklema* (see vi. § 3), his house must have faced the auditorium. Probably the school of Sokrates had in front of it an easily moveable wall, by a door in which Strepsiades was let into the court; as he entered the wall must have been shifted so that the audience might see the interior of the court (vi. § 2).

IV. *Wasps*.—The heroes of this play are Philokleon and his son Bdelykleon, names coined to signify the affection and aversion for Kleon felt by their respective possessors. Philokleon is bitten to an outrageous degree by the Attic mania for sitting on juries[1]; and Bdelykleon, with two slaves, is watching with nervous vigilance to keep him confined in his house—no light task, for the old man is constantly crawling through outlets like the stove-pipe, the chimney, and the tiles, or hiding under the donkey's stomach. The chorus of old fellow-jurymen enters, to take him with them to the courts; as a symbol of the temper of Attic juries, they are dressed as wasps and wear stings. As they are helping him to climb out they are caught by the watchers, and a scuffle ensues, upon which Bdelykleon offers to prove that the power of the Athenian juries is a mere shadow. The challenge is accepted, and the *agon* begins. Philokleon dilates on the flatteries of powerful culprits, the humours and melodramas of the courts, the dignity of the position, and the pay. Bdelykleon points out that the juries do not get a tenth of the

[1] On this see Dr. Sandys' notes to Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens*, c. 63 ff.

State's revenues; over nine-tenths go to demagogues, who are their masters. His words carry conviction to the chorus; but Philokleon's heart is in the courts. To console him Bdelykleon arranges an imitation tribunal at home, where he sits in judgment on the dog for stealing cheese, surrounded by every domestic comfort. The trial ends in an artfully engineered acquittal, greatly to the horror of the judge, who detests acquittals on principle; and to soothe him Bdelykleon leads him away to a party. After the *parabasis* has been sung, father and son return, the latter with difficulty inducting the former into the customs and manners of fashionable circles; this accomplished, they retire. Soon a slave enters, to report that the once austere old man has been wilder than any of the youngsters at the party; and the appearance of Philokleon with the flute-girl, followed by Bdelykleon and persons whom he has assaulted on the way, confirms the tale; the play ends with Philokleon figuring as a dancer.

V. *Peace.*—Farmer Trygaios flies up to heaven on a giant dung-beetle, to get Peace from Zeus; for the Peloponnesian war is still desolating Greece. On arriving at Olympos, represented by a booth on a raised scaffold, he finds only Hermes, who tells him the gods have shifted their quarters from Olympos, leaving War in their place, and War has buried Peace in a deep pit. War now appears with the mortar in which he will bray Greece; but as the pestles of Athens and Sparta have been lost (Kleon and Brasidas have perished very recently), he retires to procure another. In the interval Trygaios hurries to the pit (in the orchestra) where Peace is buried, and summons a chorus of Attic farmers, assisted by a band of supernumeraries representing Greeks of all races, to aid in bringing her up. Hermes tries to interrupt the work, but is bribed to silence. At last, after much digging and hauling by the supernumeraries, the puppet representing Peace is half drawn out of the hole. The chorus now complete the work and extract Peace; she is followed by *Opōrā* and *Theōriā* (the personifications of fruit-time and of attendance at festivals), who are played by mute actors. Hermes presides over the work, and explains how Peace came thus to be lost. Peace is left standing by her pit; Opora is given as bride to Trygaios, who is ordered to take Theoria to the Council. The two goddesses and Trygaios walk across the orchestra into what was at the beginning regarded as the house of Trygaios, their passage being assumed to be a descent to earth. After the

parabasis has been sung they reappear from this same house, which is once more regarded as the house of Trygaios, the assumption being that now for the first time they reach *terra firma*. Trygaios disposes of the two goddesses according to the order of Hermes, and fetches an altar on which to do sacrifice to Peace, who is still in the orchestra. The play now breaks up into a series of little scenes, in which are emphasised the joys and humours of the new reign of Peace, and ends with the wedding chorus of Trygaios' bridal with Opora.[1]

VI. *Birds*.—Desiring a change from the worry and litigious spirit of life at Athens, Peithetairos and Euelpides set out, guided by a jackdaw and a raven, to seek the advice of Tereus, the Hoopoe, who was once a Thracian king and is now king of the birds. On reaching his house, Peithetairos is struck with the idea of inducing the birds to combine and fortify the atmosphere in which they live, midway between heaven and earth; thus they will be able to keep mankind and the gods alike in subjection, checking the latter from visiting their loves on earth and, if necessary, from receiving their diet, the sweet savour of sacrifice, and compelling the former, in return for suzerain protection, to give to the birds pregustations of all offerings to the gods. The birds (the chorus), though at first hostile and suspicious, are at last won over in the *agon* by Peithetairos. In the *parabasis* they sing the supreme antiquity of their race, offspring of Love, the child of Chaos and Night, and their present and future estate. In the following scenes Peithetairos and his friend, now both supplied with wings, arrange the foundation of their fortified city, Nephelokokkygia, or Cloud-cuckoo-town, in the air. They are visited by a poet, a soothsayer, Meton the astronomer and reformer of the Attic calendar, a commissioner from Athens, a hawker of copies of Nephelokokkygian laws. The fortification is quickly completed; but a deity from Olympos slips through into the domain of the birds. This proves to be Iris, the messenger of her father Zeus, who wants to know what has become of mankind's sacrifices. She is sent back with a warning that the birds are now the only gods. After judiciously disposing of a young reprobate who wants to enter the colony, gratifying the request of the poet Kinesias for a pair of wings to assist his lyric flights, and summarily ejecting an informer, Peithetairos is visited by Prometheus, who suggests that he should

[1] On the scenery see Robert, *Hermes*, xxxi. 551 ff.

take advantage of the confusion reigning in Olympos to demand in marriage the housekeeper of Zeus, Basileia ('kingship'), which will make him ruler of the world. The next arrivals are a deputation from Olympos—Poseidon, Herakles, and a savage god of the same race as the barbarous Triballoi of the north—who come to treat for peace. Herakles, won over by the culinary attractions of Nephelokokkygia, willingly agrees to the demands of Peithetairos and the birds; the Triballian deity, who can hardly speak a word of Greek, is understood to assent, especially as he is threatened with a thrashing by Herakles if he disagrees; and so Poseidon is outvoted. The play ends with a wedding chorus greeting the return of Peithetairos with his bride.[1]

VII. *Lysistrate.*—Feeling at home the pinch of the war, a representative meeting of Greek ladies, headed by Lysistrate, decides to hasten a peace by refusing conjugal rights and seizing the Akropolis and its treasures. A chorus of old men entering to frustrate the latter *coup* is met and checked by a chorus of old women. A Commissioner (*probūlos*) who with some policemen tries to arrest the ringleaders is repulsed, and learns that the women have determined to take the management of the State into their own hands. After much engineering Lysistrate carries her project through. The Spartans, in the same domestic plight as the Athenians, make overtures for peace to the latter. Lysistrate dictates the terms, and the play ends with the social union of the whilom enemies.

VIII. *Thesmophoriazusai.*—Euripides, alarmed at the anger aroused among the women by his unflattering studies of them, begs Agathon (above, iii. § 4), as one well fitted for the part, to disguise himself as a woman attending the solemn assembly of the Thesmophoria (the women's festival to Demeter and Kore), and there speak in his favour. Agathon declines. A middle-aged kinsman of Euripides, Mnesilochos, offers to play this *rôle*; he joins the meeting undetected, and in answer to the charges points out that the ladies are really worse than Euripides paints. A storm rises. His sex is found out. His attempts to escape are a series of parodies on Euripidean plays, the *Telephos*, *Palamedes*, *Helene*, and *Andromeda*, in the last two of which he is supported by Euripides disguised as the tragic hero. However Euripides only succeeds in getting his kinsman from the clutches

[1] On the scenery see vi. § 2 (2) *n.*

of the women by promising not to speak ill of them in the future; the policeman who is set on guard over the prisoner is removed by a decoy, and the two kinsmen slip away.

The background consisted of two buildings, the house of Agathon and the Thesmophorion. Both probably faced the auditorium, and from both an *ekkyklema* (vi. §§ 2, 3) was rolled out, in the former case containing Agathon and his chorus, in the latter 'properties' suggesting the interior of the temple, as well as a chorus and some supernumeraries.

IX. *Frogs.*—Dionysos, disguised as Herakles, descends with his slave Xanthias into Hades to bring back his favourite Euripides. Having received directions from Herakles, they journey till they reach the Styx, across which they are ferried by Charon amidst a croaking chorus of frogs. Arrived at the other bank, they are soon met by the chorus of the play, the blessed souls of those initiated into the Mysteries.[1] After a series of adventures, they are brought to Pluton and Phersephatta, King and Queen of Hades, the reception taking place behind the scenes while the *parabasis* is being sung. Xanthias now reappears, fraternising with Aiakos, the porter of Pluton, who tells him that the terrific hubbub which he hears arises from a squabble for the tragic presidency between Euripides and old Aischylos, which is now to be settled by a competition under the arbitration of Dionysos, who has now dropped the disguise of Herakles. This *agon*, which now follows, is a dramatic criticism of the two tragedians' styles. Euripides dwells on the other's fantastic clumsy methods of art, comparing them with his own glib realism and rationalistic purpose; Aischylos claims moral results exclusively for his teaching, and charges the rationalist with spreading disease in the souls of the public. Each criticises the style of the other's prologues and lyrics; their verses are weighed in a balance, those of Euripides proving far lighter; and finally their advice on present politics is asked, that of Aischylos appearing so satisfactory that Dionysos decides to take him back to the upper world to teach anew his wisdom to a generation that has forgotten it.

The *skene* consists of two houses, that of Pluton facing the audience, and that of Herakles at an angle to it (vi. § 2).

X. *Ekklesiazusai.*—Led by Praxagora, the women of Athens secure false beards and their husbands' clothes by night, and

[1] According to Zielinski, these form a primary and secondary chorus of men and women respectively.

after a rehearsal of their masculine *rôles* fill the place of assembly (*ekklēsiā*) in the early morning, where, before any considerable number of men can arrive, they pass a law by which the whole management of the State is handed over to their sex. Praxagora is to be dictator. As she returns home in pretended innocence, she is told the news; she unfolds her programme, which includes complete communism and free love (limited, however, by an equalisation of opportunities in favour of the unattractive). The following scenes depict events arising from the realisation of this scheme.

XI. *Plutos*.—Farmer Chremylos, poor and honest in the midst of prosperous roguery, has sought advice as to the moral education of his son from the Delphic oracle, which has bidden him follow the first person he should meet. This proves to be a taciturn blind man, who at last under threats reveals that he is Plutos, the god of wealth, whom Zeus has blinded to keep from visiting the worthy. He is prevailed upon to allow an attempt to be made to restore his sight, so that he may enrich the right men, and enters the house of Chremylos, who summons a chorus of farmers and his friend Blepsidemos. Suddenly Poverty bursts in and reviles them for trying to banish her; Chremylos' plea that the righteous ought to be happy she answers by a proof that want is the spur of all industry and activity, but she fails to convince and is sent away. The two friends now take Plutos to spend a night in the temple of Asklepios.[1] His experiences and healing there are reported by the slave Karion; and he himself soon reappears, seeing and ready to visit the worthy, and in the first place Chremylos. The farmer's house is at once blessed with lavish plenty and thronged with visitors of various sorts, whose advent is described in the concluding scenes.

§ 2. **Other Old Comedians.**—We have already spoken of the first poets of the Old Comedy, Chionides, Ekphantides, and Magnes, as well as of Kratinos and Krates (iv. §§ 3, 4). Of the latter two, we may add that Kratinos died a little before 420 B.C., and Krates was originally an actor in his service. Of the remainder, it must suffice us to mention only a few of the most important—Pherekrates, who gained his

[1] For an official record of the 'cures' worked in the Epidaurian temple of this god, see Collitz-Bechtel, *Griechische Dialektinschriften*, No. 3339 ff., and *Athenische Mittheilungen*, xxi. 67, 309, xix. 97.

first victory in 437, and who frequently indulged in political satire, notably at the expense of Alkibiades; Telekleides and Hermippos, whose attacks on Perikles were especially vigorous; Phrynichos, who first entered the lists in 429; Kallias, famous for his 'ABC-tragedy' (about 432); Hegemon, who was the first of Attic comedians to give a foremost place to parody[1]; and, greatest of them all, Eupolis (died 411 B.C.), who in his day was second to Aristophanes alone.[2]

[1] Aristotle (*Poet.* 3) says he was the first to write 'parodies,' *i.e.* *complete* travesties; odds and ends of parody were doubtless common enough at all times. Cf. Athen. xv. 699*a*. He flourished about 413 B.C.

[2] The fragments that have survived of the Old, as well as the Middle and New Comedy, are best edited in Kock's *Fragmenta Com. Graec.*, which has superseded Meineke's collection.

CHAPTER VI

The Attic Theatre of the Fifth Century

§ 1. **Occasion and Place.**—Technically, dramatic representations were competitions of choruses, performances held in honour of Dionysos at three of his feasts—the Country Dionysia in the month Poseideon (December-January), the Lenaia[1] in Gamelion (January-February), and the Great Dionysia in Elaphebolion (March-April). Our knowledge is practically limited to the last, the home of tragedy, to which however comedies were added about 465 B.C. The place of the Great Dionysia, and (probably after 500 B.C.) of the Lenaia too, was the Precinct (*temenos*) of Dionysos Eleuthereus, on the south-eastern slope of the Akropolis, which we shall briefly describe.

§ 2. **The Theatre.**[2]—This, as universally in Greece, was an uncovered space. As the accompanying rough sketch will make clear, it fell into two divisions: (1) the place of the audience, *theātron* or auditorium, and (2) the round dancing-floor, called *orchēstrā*, with its associated stage-buildings. The former lay on the slope of the hill, and formed almost a semicircle around the latter.

(1) Before the fifth century the audience probably sat on rough wooden benches, or stood, on the slope commanding a view of the terrace of the orchestra towards its bottom. As the onlookers at the sides of the orchestra needed to be

[1] See above, ch. iv. § 3.

[2] The chief authorities for the following sections, besides those quoted by Oehmichen (Müller's *Handbuch*, v. 3) are Dörpfeld-Reisch, *Griech. Theater*; Robert, *Hermes*, xxxi. 530 ff., xxxii. 421 ff.; Bethe, *Prolegomena*. My own views are in the main those of Robert.

artificially raised so as to see into it over one another's heads, plain scaffoldings were at first built here for the occasion, but these were soon (about 500 B.C.) replaced by artificial elevations of piled earth. Throughout the fifth century this arrangement continued, the seats being regularly of wood.

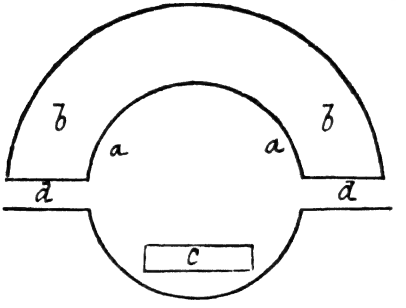


FIG. 9.—CONJECTURAL OUTLINE OF THE ATHENIAN THEATRE IN THE FIFTH CENTURY.

aa. Orchestra. *bb*. Auditorium (*theatron*).
c. Skene. *dd*. Parodoi.

(2) The orchestra itself was simply a round walled-in terrace of about 24 m. diameter, originally intended for the dances of all choruses, whether 'tragic' or 'cyclic.' Hence it was at first a clear space. It was of levelled earth, and was entered by two side-passages or *parodoi*, which terminated the auditorium towards the south, and were probably in their direction a continuation of the cross-axis of the circle of the orchestra.[1] Through them entered audience and chorus.[2] The actors too sometimes used them;

[1] This is Robert's view. Dörpfeld puts them somewhat further south, thus extending the auditorium into more than a semicircle.

[2] Naturally players supposed to be entering from the town would come in by the passage to the left of the audience, those from the country by that to their right.

but they occasionally appeared on the scene by the 'Charon's ladder,' a trap-door, probably of considerable size, which lay in the middle of the orchestra and descended into an underground passage, the entrance to which was at the back of the terrace of the orchestra, where it rose above the level of the surrounding precinct. A few yards to the south-west of the orchestra was the ancient temple of Dionysos Eleuthereus.

Such was the simple 'stage' on which the early dramas of Aischylos, and even of Sophokles, were played. Actor and chorus stood on the same level, often side by side. Scenery was unknown. The text told the audience what scene they were to imagine. In the centre, or near it, a temporary structure, mainly of wood, could be raised to represent—with the aid of the imagination—an altar, a rock, etc., if the plot of the play called for it.

Behind this structure was a crane (*mēchanē*), which raised up actors playing the *rôles* of deities from the rear of the orchestra, carried them through the air, and deposited them in the front, if necessary. Thus in the *Prometheus Bound* of Aischylos[1] a 'rock' is built up over the 'Charon's ladder'; on it a puppet representing Prometheus is nailed and chained, while an actor inside the scaffold of the 'rock' recites the verses given to Prometheus. The chorus of Ocean-nymphs appears in an aerial car lifted by a powerful crane, and descends upon the 'rock,' where it apparently stays throughout the play, finally sinking into Tartaros with the hero. A similar building serves in the *Suppliants* and perhaps in the *Seven* as an altar; in the *Persians* it is used first as a seat of the council, then as the grave of Dareios (who rises as a ghost by the 'Charon's ladder'), while for the rest of the play it is disregarded, the scene being now some unspecified place outside the city. Statues were occasionally used to suggest more vividly an altar (as in the *Suppliants*).

About 465 B.C. a great innovation was made. The *skēnē*,

[1] See above, iii. § 1.

a plain wooden booth, was set up for the occasion somewhere in the furthermost half of the orchestra, and thus, unless the text said something else, served as the now usual background—a house or temple. Sometimes the skene might stand for something different; in the *Aias* of Sophokles it represents a hut. But usually it was meant for a palace or temple, and the front wall was painted to suit, and pierced by three doors.[1] Its practical use was that of a dressing-room. It stood on a low threshold, and was by no means massive.[2]

Its roof, as its later name *theologeion* implies, served as a platform which, as in medieval plays, was appropriated to gods, whether they descended on it from the crane or mounted by a ladder from behind. Towards the end of the fifth century it was apparently the usual place for gods; but earlier there was more freedom, gods appearing sometimes in the orchestra, though (except in comedy) mortals never stood on the *theologeion*.

The skene later was increased by a second story, or *distegiā*[3]; this is certain for Comedy,[4] and for one of Euripides' later plays, the *Phoenician Women* (after 420 B.C.). Comedy also doubles, or even trebles the skene; its background may be composed of two 'houses' alongside of one another (Arist. *Thesm.*), or with their

[1] The *paraskēnia* or porches were in all probability represented by painting; probably an attempt was made at representing perspective after Apollodoros had established this principle of art.

[2] In some dramas of this period (*e.g.* Soph. *Phil.* and *Oid. at Kolonos*; Eur. *Antiope*, *Andromeda*, *Kykl.*; Arist. *Birds*) no skene seems to have been used. The scene was here the open country in which 'rocks, if needed, could be more easily built up of stones and boards' (Robert, *Gött. Gel. Anz.* 1897, p. 36).

[3] This should be distinguished from the other kind of upper story which stands at the rear of the theologeion, as its background, and for which there is no evidence in the drama of the fifth century (viii. § 1).

[4] But the 'house of Zeus' in the *Peace* of Aristophanes is not a second skene on top of another; it is a second house by the side of a first, but raised on a high scaffold. See Robert, *Hermes*, xxxi. 551 f., and above, v. § 1.

fronts at right angles to one another (*Frogs*, *Peace*, *Clouds*), or even of three, one of which fronts the auditorium while the other two, facing one another, stand on its right and left (*Acharn.*).

Further scenery was apparently still limited to movable altars, mounds, or graves.[1] The former were usual when the skene was a temple, and perhaps the palace too had in front the obelisk of Apollon Agyieus customary before the orthodox Greek dwelling.[2] Statues before temples were rare (an instance is Aisch. *Eum.* 259), less so before palaces.

The stone skene of the next century had projecting wings or *paraskēnia*, so that a curtain drawn from one to the other would cover the front of the skene. Had the wooden skene of the fifth century anything of the kind? Dörpfeld-Reisch think so, and argue that in certain plays, in the first scene of which a crowd is already gathered on the stage (Eurip. *Suppl.*, *Hel.*, *Andromache*, *Andromeda*, *Tro.*, *Orest.*; Soph. *Oed. Tyr.*; Arist. *Clouds* and *Wasps*; Aisch. *Prom. Unbound*), a curtain between the *paraskenia* is necessary, as the crowds cannot enter and take up their positions before the play begins. But this is doubtful. Equally uncertain is the question whether in the fifth century the provisional skene was ever made permanent and masked with a *proskēnion*, *i.e.* a movable wooden wall representing the façade of a palace or temple, and set up a few feet in front of the skene.[3]

Other 'properties' too were not unknown. It would

[1] For the position of the graves see Dörpfeld-Reisch, 250 f.

[2] The traditional *thymelē*, or permanent altar of Dionysos in the orchestra, is a pure fiction. 'Thymele' means merely a base, groundwork, hence (1) stylobate, or whole *krepidoma* of a building, (2) orchestra itself, as Robert has shown. The musical competitions were called *θυμελικοί* because they were held in the orchestra at a time when actors commonly appeared on a raised stage, *i.e.* after the fifth century. There was apparently no regular stone altar of Dionysos in the orchestra in that century.

[3] See Dörpfeld-Reisch, pp. 252 ff., 369 ff.

seem that already peals of thunder and lightning were artificially produced; and perhaps the dust-storms mentioned in the *Prometheus Bound*, v. 1085, were not wholly imaginary.

§ 3. **Machines.**—(1) The *Ekkyklēma*. Scene-shifting under these conditions was practically impossible during the course of a play. When a change of scene took place, the skene might be ignored, as in Sophokles' *Aias*, v. 815 ff.; or it might by a slight change, or without any change at all, perform a different function, as in the *Eumenides* of Aischylos, where at the outset it is the temple of the Delphian Apollon, and then (v. 235 ff.) becomes, probably by changing the statue in front, a shrine of Athena in Athens. But as it was often desirable to take the spectator into the interior of the skene, which under existing conditions was impossible, the curious device of the *ekkyklema* was hit upon. This is a new application of the old 'Cart of Thespis' of which Horace speaks (*Epist. ad Pisones*, 276); we have already (§ 2) seen it in another form in the aerial car of the Ocean-nymphs in the *Prometheus*, and it reappears often in the chariots which the tragedians were fond of bringing in processional pomp into the orchestra.

The *ekkyklema* (also called *exōstrā*) is a platform on rollers or small wheels, large enough to hold more than a dozen men, and low enough to allow those upon it to walk down with ease into the orchestra. Probably a groove was cut in the threshold of the skene to allow it to pass out over it. When it is pushed out from the doorway,[1] with actors and supernumeraries grouped upon it, the audience have to imagine that they, with the chorus, have entered the house or temple, and are confronted within by these figures.

[1] Probably the fifth century only knew of one *ekkyklema*, rolled out from the central door. Later three were perhaps sometimes used, one from each door (see Körte, *Rhein. Mus.* lii. 334). But it is possible that this latter reference is to the post-classical *ekkyklema*, a wooden or canvas wall turning round on a pivot.

Thus in Sophokles' *Aias*, Tekmessa with the words, 'Lo! I open the door,' is supposed to admit the chorus into the hut of Aias, while in reality the platform is wheeled out, on which sits the hero in the midst of the carcasses of the cattle slaughtered by him in his madness. In the *Agamemnon* of Aischylos the chorus are supposed to enter the palace; in reality Klytaimestra is wheeled out, with two puppets, the corpses of Agamemnon and Kassandra, at her feet. In the *Eumenides* perhaps the platform appears at v. 64, with Orestes seated on the *omphalos* or sacred stone in the heart of the Delphic temple, with the Eumenides sleeping around him; at v. 140 they spring up and finding him gone leap into the orchestra with cries of anger. All the time the scene, from v. 64 to v. 234, is supposed to be in the interior of the temple. Similar cases are to be seen in the *Elektra* of Sophokles, the *Mad Herakles* and *Hippolytos* of Euripides, and the burlesques of Comedy.[1]

(2) *The Mēchanē.*—This crane has been above described (§ 2). It was now fixed behind the skene, and rose up, exactly like a modern crane, when it was needed to bring a god floating through the air and to deposit him on the *theologeion* or on some other platform (as in the *Prometheus*). In the *Eumenides* of Aischylos Athena first appears on it (v. 397), reappearing later by the *parodos* and entering the orchestra. Medeia's dragon-car was carried aloft by it, and by the end of the century it was almost the exclusive mode of bringing gods on the 'stage.'[2]

[1] Dörpfeld-Reisch (p. 236 ff.) deny this *ekkyklema*. They hold that the word means a revolving wall, or something of the kind, which by turning round presented a new scene. But this, as Robert has pointed out, is Hellenistic. Neckel, *Das Ekkyklema* (Programm, Friedland in Mecklenburg, 1890), only allows the machine, as ordinarily understood, for Euripides and comedy.

[2] Instances are—in Aischylos the *Psychostasia*; in Euripides, the *Hippolytos*, *Andromache*, *Mad Herakles*, *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, *Suppliants*, *Ion*, *Trojan Women*, *Elektra*, *Helena*, *Orestes*, *Bacchantes*; and in the pseudo-Eur. *Rhesos*. With what regularity it was used to bring up gods on the *theologeion* is not clear.

(3) The 'Charon's ladder' we have already discussed. It seems to have changed little in this century. The persons who appeared by the trap-door (*anapiesma*) were by no means necessarily ghosts. Aias probably rose upon it (*Ai.* v. 815) to give his soliloquy and stab himself; our modern stage directions would be 'curtain rises—Aias discovered alone in a wood.' When the corpse is found, Tekmessa reverently casts a cloak over it, under cover of which Aias probably went down again on the trap-door and substituted a puppet for his own person, returning into the orchestra in another *rôle*.[1]

§ 4. **The Players.**—(1) The dress of the players of comedy has already been described (iv. § 3). It only remains to call attention to the free fantasy of the poets, who brought on the stage most extraordinary creations of the imagination, as choruses of Clouds and Birds,[2] and abstractions such as War or Poverty, to say nothing of comic gods.

The costume of the satyr-chorus is difficult to fix in detail, especially as after 450 B.C. the native Ionic Silenoi (horse-spirits) began to be substituted for the Peloponnesian Satyroi (goat-spirits).[3] Tradition, referring perhaps to the later drama, speaks of a short tunic and hose of goatskin, a larger and a smaller embroidered cloak, as well as one of purple, as the dress of the Father-Silenos (*Papposilēnos*); in art he, with others of his *troupe*, appears also in a suit of goatskin tights.

The usual dress of the Satyroi consists of flesh-coloured tights and a goatskin girdle, to which a *phallos* and goat's tail is tied. This girdle is the only trait retained when (after about 450 B.C.) the Silenoi take the place of Satyroi; in other respects the horse-type comes to dominate.

The dress of tragedy varied between the Ionic national dress, the linen *chitōn* or long sewn shirt reaching to the

[1] See Robert, *Hermes*, xxxi. 530 ff.

[2] The Wasps of Aristophanes do not really represent wasps, but old jurymen with some waspish attributes.

[3] See above, i. § 7 *n.*

ankles, and the Doric *chitōn*, a piece of woollen stuff fastened with clasps over the shoulder and down the sides. The former is apparently the rule in Aischylos; but after the middle of the century it remained only in the wardrobe of women, where, as the texts bear witness, it was found by the side of the Doric dress. The daily costume of the men preserved of it only the name and the general shape, being now a shortened Ionic chiton, but of wool.[1] It was however still in regular use in the wardrobes of tragic actors, heroes (not chorus) of satyr-plays, harpers, flute-players, and some other performers. While the dress of comedy was the woollen robe of daily life, the tragic dress was brilliantly coloured; gold, purple, and white were common. Mourning characters wore subdued or dark colours. If we may judge from later tradition and art, the actor wore a long sleeved tunic, girt high over the breast, and perhaps gloves also. In changing his *rôle* he simply threw over this a different shawl or another tunic. Special characters had special shawls. Seers like Teiresios wore the *agrēnon*, a woollen mantle of network, princes like Agamemnon the upper-chiton (*kolpōma*), hunters and soldiers a short purple cloak (*chlamys*), queens a purple upper-chiton with a white purple-bordered cloak flung over it.

To increase the dignity of his appearance, the tragic actor may have been slightly padded and raised by the *kothornos* and *onkos*. The latter was an upward prolongation of the forehead of the mask; the former was a square shoe with a raised sole. But whether, and if so when, these stage tricks were used in the fifth century is quite obscure.[2]

Masks were worn by all performers[3]; some were typical,

[1] See Studniczka, *Beitrage z. Gesch. d. altgr. Tracht*, 23 ff.

[2] The increase in the size of the *kothornos* is attested for Aischylos by his biographer, who however probably based his view on mere speculation.

[3] Whether the earliest tragic players instead of masks daubed their faces with winelees (Suidas s.v. Θέσπις; Horace, *Ep. ad Pis.* 277) is uncertain; that this was the practice with the oldest comedians is

such as that of the king in tragedy, the old man in comedy, while some were specially suited to the character. The fine differentiation of New Comedy, by which the mask tells better than a programme the character of the wearer, was however hardly as yet begun.

It is probable that in comedy and tragedy old men carried a curved staff, and countrymen wore the rustic costume of the leather jerkin with stick and wallet.

(2) Unlike the chorus, who could enter only by the *parodoi* (§ 2), the actor (*hypokritēs*) could also come in by the 'Charon's ladder,' or through the doors of the skene, or by the crane; or he might appear on the roof of the skene, the *theologeion*. His place was usually near to the front of the skene, but naturally might vary for dramatic reasons.

The idea of the drama is based on the combination of chorus and actors. The latter sustain the chief burden of the action; but the former are, strictly speaking, actors too, playing the part not of abstract onlookers but spectators of a definite type and character, though they do not really interfere in the course of the action. They usually entered as a compact body through the *parodoi*; at first the tragic chorus was twelve strong,[1] then fifteen, while that of comedy was regularly a double troop, twenty-four in all (above, iv. § 3). But the poet could vary this rule, and the chorus might come in irregularly, in two or more groups, or even one by one. Once in the orchestra, they had to play the part of sympathetic or co-operating spectators while the acts or *epeisodia* of tragedy and the scenes of comedy were in

stated by a scholiast, but may be a conclusion drawn from a false etymology of *τρυγῳδία*, another name for comedy, which is just as likely to be derived from *τρύγη* and to mean 'harvest-song' or the like (see Bentley's *Phalaris*, 288 ff.). The word *τρυγοδαίμων* (*Clouds*, 296) seems to be a comic 'portmanteau-word' compounded of *τρυγῳδός* and *κακοδαίμων*.

[1] This is always the case in Aischylos. The same chorus-singers played in all the dramas brought out by the same poet at the same festival.

progress,[1] and in the intervals to perform dance and song. In tragedy the short speeches by which they took part in the action[2] were spoken or given in either operatic or melodramatic recitative (see below) by their leader; they were rarely divided among the several members. The lyrics sung (and danced) in the course of the action were probably divided among them severally; but the performance between the acts (*stasimon*) was sung, with dance accompaniment, by the whole chorus in unison. In comedy each of the lyrical odes was regularly sung in unison by one of the two counter-choruses, and its responsion by the other troop; the iambic trimeters or verses of three iambic *metra* (see above, i. § 6) were given by one of the two leaders, as were all the other non-lyrical parts of the chorus' *rôle* (see also iv. § 3).

In the actors' *rôles*, lyrical portions were sung with dance. As to the iambic trimeters of dialogue and action there is much doubt; in comedy they may sometimes have been simply declaimed, but in tragedy, though the same *may* have been the rule in dialogue, we have almost direct evidence that the iambic declamations (*rhēseis*) were given in an operatic recitative (*parakatalogē*), with flute accompaniment.[3] Probably there was also melodramatic delivery (the normal voice with flute accompaniment); but how these various musical forms were distributed over the parts must remain undecided.[4]

[1] This *rôle* should be carefully distinguished from that of supernumeraries (*statistai*), whom the poets brought on in large numbers; they however were mute.

[2] Spoken were conversations and remarks at the end of a declamation or a scene. Prayers, exhortations, and announcements of new arrivals, if in anapaests (a *metron* of two short and a long syllable), the leader probably gave either melodramatically or in *parakatalogē*, on which see below.

[3] Plutarch, *De Mus.* 28; Arist. *Acharn.* 1184, *Clouds*, 1370. See especially Zielinski, *Gliederung d. Komödie*, 288 ff., and Ribbeck, *Röm. Tragödie*, 633.

[4] Zielinski believes that in comedy iambic trimeters and tetrameters were given, according to the situation, in operatic recitative,

It is at least probable that both modes of delivery were accompanied by harmonious gesticulation, a more pronounced form of which was the dance performed during the singing of lyrical parts. The typical dance of tragedy was the stately *emmeleia*, of comedy the vulgar *kordax*, of the satyr-play the *sikinnis*; but the other dance-figures were numerous.

The grouping of the chorus when it entered or stood together in a body is highly uncertain. Some would arrange the chorus of fifteen, entering from the left with the audience on its right, in the following form:—

k	*l*	*m*	*n*	*o*
f	*g*	*h*	*i*	*j*
a	*b*	*C*	*d*	*e*

Here *C* is the chorus-leader, *abCde* the 'right stoichos' and *klmno* the 'left stoichos,' *fghij* the 'laurostatai,' *afk* the 'first zygon,' and so on,—an arrangement which agrees with the terms of tradition, but is wholly hypothetical. The distribution of other choruses is still more uncertain.[1] There is some evidence, at least for Comedy, that when actors were playing, the chorus stood in two files facing one another, at right angles to the skene, so that the actor would be generally between them. This agrees well with the theory that the comic chorus consisted of two counter-choruses. The chorus was regularly led in and out by a solitary flute-player, who accompanied the recitative, melodramatic speaking, and song; where he stood is uncertain. The exit is in the earlier plays of Aischylos performed during the singing of a choral lyric; later he followed this rule only

simple declamation, or song, and that the latter in certain cases were also delivered melodramatically, as well as the tetrameters of anapaests. Trochaic tetrameters, he holds, were given either as song or as recitative; those of the chorus were all in recitative. He adduces reasons for believing that melodramatic delivery was original to comedy, and was thence brought into the tetrameters of tragedy.

[1] Oehmichen, I. Müller's *Handbuch*, v. 3, p. 274 ff.

at the end of the last play of a set, elsewhere concluding with operatic recitative by an actor or the chorus-leader. This recitative, by the chorus-leader, is the regular ending of the subsequent drama.

(3) The chorus consisted of Athenian burghers. The democracy had nationalised the festivals, assigning to its richer members the function (*lēitūrgiā*) of paying for the training and equipment of choruses and the hire of supernumeraries and flute-player (*chorēgiā*), while the poorer citizens performed as the chorus-singers. As with the actors, only males could perform; female players were unknown till the Roman mimes. The expense falling to the share of the rich man paying for the chorus (*chorēgos*) was considerable; in 411 B.C. it was estimated at 3000 drachmai (about £100). In the older days, before music came into the hands of specialists, the *choregos* had the satisfaction of acting himself, when competent, as chorus-leader, or sometimes as flute-player;[1] and as in theory the festivals were competitions (*agōnes*) of choruses trained by rival poets, the importance of the *choregos* almost equalled that of the poet.

The actors stood on a different footing. They too were Attic citizens, and their profession was highly reputable. Originally the poet was his own actor, and though later he added a second performer (*deuteragōnistēs*), and a third (*tritagōnistēs*), he remained as leading actor (*prōtagōnistēs*). Aischylos was protagonist in his later, sole player in his earlier dramas. Sophokles gave up this practice, owing, it is said, to a weak voice; and among the tragedians his example was generally followed. The comedians perhaps continued for some time longer to act as their own protagonists. The actors soon became independent. The protagonist was now an *impresario*, applying to the State for a contract for himself and his company to perform at the Dionysia or Lenaia; if the application was accepted, he and the troupe were assigned to one of the poets whose plays had been selected

[1] Aristotle, *Pol.* 1341 A.

by the leading magistrate (*archōn*) to compete at the coming festival. Apparently the State paid him.

While the honours of a victory in the dramatic competition were divided between the poet—technically called 'teacher' (*didaskalos*) of the players—and the *choregos*, the tragic protagonists of the different troupes acting at the same festival held a competition among themselves, after the middle of the fifth century, at the Dionysia; later there was doubtless something of the same kind at the Lenaia.

§ 5. **Festival Programme.**—For the Dionysia three tragic poets were originally selected, and when comedy was admitted three comic writers (later, after 400 B.C., five) also produced their works. But while each of the former brought out a tetralogy, or set of four plays, of which one or two were played on each day, the latter only presented one play apiece. In tragedy there were at first as many protagonists (with their troupes) as there were poets, one being assigned to present the work or works of each poet. The later rule was that each protagonist should play one of the dramas of each poet; when this custom began is uncertain.

In the Lenaia the rule was probably very similar. There were three comic poets, each producing a single play; and in 419-18 B.C. we find two tragedians exhibiting a trilogy apiece, and their protagonists competing with one another. The tragedies were played before the comedies. The Little Dionysia, organised by the parishes under the management of the parish-officials (*dēmarchoi*), also humbly imitated in their arrangements the Great Dionysia.

Some time before the Dionysia the archon decided which of the poets making application[1] deserved to have their works produced, and assigned a *choregos* to each. At

[1] It was not necessary that the plays presented before the archon should be original. They might be second editions of original plays, or they might be adaptations, or simply acquired property, though the two latter cases can hardly have been very common in the fifth century. The 'poet's' chief function was to supply plays and act as stage-manager and composer.

first too, after accepting the application of a protagonist, he allotted him to a poet, but this assignment became needless when each protagonist played in one of the dramas of each poet. Now came the *proagōn*, a ceremony of a religious kind and a procession into the theatre; then came the comedies on the next day, and after this the tragedies. At first the proagon fell probably on the 9th Elaphebolion, while the comedies took up the 10th, and the tragedies were played from the 11th to the 13th; later it would seem the proagon was held on the 8th, the comedies taking up the 9th and the tragedies the 10th and the three following days.[1]

It is fairly clear that there were five judges of the comic competition, appointed by lot, but we know nothing more with certainty. The lot also fixed the order of representations to some degree. The first step now in the Dionysia was a purification of the assembly by the sacrifice of young pigs. The performances started at early morning, and in course of time tended to take up the whole day.

The reward of the victorious poet was a honorarium of unknown extent and a crown of ivy. The *choregos* shared the credit of the victory, and dedicated a votive tablet (*pinax*), with perhaps some 'properties,' to Dionysos.

From the fifth century we find the lessee of the theatre (*architektōn*) charging for admission to performances. For the poorer classes this fee was defrayed by the State out of the so-called *theōrikon*, a fund set aside for this purpose. Such a payment is attributed to Perikles; but according to Aristotle (*Ath. Const.* 28) it was Kleophon who established it, at any rate upon a permanent footing.

[1] See Oehmichen, p. 193.

CHAPTER VII

Later Greek Drama

§ 1. **Tragedy and Satyr-play.**—Practically tragedy had ended with the fifth century; the inspiration of Melpomene was gone. There continued to be many tragic poets; but apparently at their best they were men of talent, not of genius. Little need be said of them; only names and fragments survive. The spirit of Euripides now dominated the tragic stage, prescribing as main subject studies of character or emotions and invention of situations; but the master's intensity of interests and apostolic fervour were lacking. Ingenuity, psychological subtlety, came to prevail; declamations increased and action diminished. The creative power of the Athenians also suffered a rapid decline; it was not purely from admiration of their greatness that plays of the masters were repeatedly staged.[1] The chorus indeed still existed, but it no longer danced, and probably its numbers were reduced. Instead of being an actor whose personality contributed something to the general harmony of the drama, it approached still more closely than in Euripides to the condition of a mere appanage, whose stasima were purely interludes.

The most important names of the fourth century are Astydamas, son of Morsimos,[2] the basis of whose statue has been found in the theatre of Lykurgos, Dikaiogenes, Sophokles (grandson of the great poet), Euripides (nephew

[1] Above, vi. § 5 *n.*; below, viii. § 4.

[2] On this family see Clinton, *Fasti Hell.*[2] xxxv. *n.*

of the master), Polyidos, Chairemon, whose fragments are especially noteworthy, Dionysios the tyrant, Antiphon, Aphareus, Theodektes, the Cynic Diogenes of Sinope, who is credited with some tragedies, Krates, and Moschion, who seemingly in his *Themistokles*, and perhaps too in his *Pheraioi*, tried his hand at the historical drama.

In the next century the exotic of tragedy found a stimulating hothouse in the university of Alexandreia, the *Museion*. Tragedies were written by the seven writers known as the 'Pleiad,' whose names are variously given: Homeros the younger, Lykophron, and Philiskos undoubtedly belonged to this constellation, Alexandros of Aitolia, Sositheos, and Dionysiades almost certainly, while the seventh was either Aiantides or Sosiphanes. All these scholars attempted tragic composition, as did also King Ptolemaios Philopator and the learned poet Kallimachos. Outside Alexandreia few names of note are recorded; the most remarkable are those of the versatile satirist Timon and the philosopher Herakleides of Pontos, who is said [1] to have written plays and published them as works of Thespis. The later writers are too obscure to deserve mention.

Under the Roman emperors tragedy was dead. A few writers are named in literature or on inscriptions; their works however were probably mere bundles of rhetorical declamations. Now and then selections from classical authors were produced,—usually declamations, but perhaps sometimes arias as well, adapted to the operatic style of popular artistes.[2] Tragedy was made impossible by the vulgar passion for the *pantomimus* [3]; by the age of Constantine it was quite extinct.

The satyr-play too survived the fifth century, and found a new home in Alexandreia, where among others Kallimachos tried his hand upon it. Timon the satirist did the same. But we know practically nothing of its further history. Apparently

[1] By Diogenes Laertius, v. 92.
[2] See Dio Chrysost. *Or.* xix. p. 487 R.
[3] See below, Appendix i. § 2.

it gravitated at times in the direction of Old Comedy, satirising contemporaries.[1] The chorus still continued to dance, unlike that of tragedy.

§ 2. **Middle Comedy.**—Above (v. § 1) we have remarked on the causes which led to the change from 'Old' to 'Middle' Comedy. The age of the latter may roughly be fixed at 400-336 B.C. Its character cannot be so summarily given. It was not entirely free from personalities, which indeed survived even in the New Comedy, as we see from the references of Philippides, Timokles, Menandros, and Archedikos to Stratokles, Harpalos, King Alexander, and Demochares respectively. But on the whole it is concerned with types. The old extravagance of conception is smoothed down, sometimes almost to vanishing point; the play usually stands on the footing of private life and private interests. Hence the Middle Comedy, even in its present fragmentary state, throws much light on Athenian society in that age. The social power and rapacity of the demi-monde, the tricks of parasites, the professional cook's pretensions to philosophy, are favourite themes. There is much literary criticism, especially parody. Innuendo is largely used, and poets, musicians, and philosophers are frequent butts. The tone is largely that of the refined pleasure-loving agnostic, and surprises us by its anticipation of the later comedy. The metrical versatility of the old poets too has gone; the metres are usually non-lyrical, iambic trimeters and trochaic tetrameters, sometimes relieved by systems of anapaests (vi. § 4 (2), i. § 6). On the chorus see below, § 3.

To the thirty-nine names of poets of this school preserved by tradition, the inscriptions have added a small increment (see *Corpus Insc. Att.* ii. 971-7). Among the most important may be mentioned Alexis, Alkaios, Amphis, Anaxandrides, Anaxilas, Antiphanes, Araros (son of Aristophanes, and brother of the poets Nikostratos and Philippos), Archippos

[1] For instance, the *Agen* attributed to Python attacked Harpalos, and the *Menedemos* of Lykophron seemingly satirised the philosopher of that name (Nauck, *Trag. Gr. Fr.*, *s.n.*).

(iv. § 4), Ephippos, Eubulos, Heniochos, Nikochares, Strattis, and Theopompos.

§ 3. **New Comedy.**—The truest scion of the Euripidean drama was not the moribund tree of tragedy but the thriving stock of New or Menandrian Comedy. With his exclusive interest in human problems, Euripides had brought down Tragedy from her old pedestal of religious elevation, and none of his successors could restore her to it; so she joined hands with Comedy, which was now regenerated by the Euripidean spirit. A tone of greater dignity and refinement generally came over the comic stage. The play became one of real life; characters and situations were more lovingly studied; elegant simplicity of style and sententious wisdom were insisted upon; plots were worked out with singular ingenuity, especially in the recognitions which formed the climax. In a word, the drama became a Comedy of Manners like that of Molière. The literary satire of the Middle Comedy had almost vanished; little or no trace of it remained, except an occasional attack on the pretensions of the philosophers. The Attic culture of the day, the reign of the *demi-mondaine* and the *condottiere*, of unbelief and superstition, are faithfully mirrored; the tone is one of quiet agnostic resignation, refined enjoyment of good fortune, and calm toleration of evil.

The characters are types of those of daily life; though delicately discriminated, they are mostly stock figures, the mask at once telling the audience whether the wearer, for instance, is a good or bad slave, a profligate or a virtuous young gentleman. Chief among them are the old father, the steady and the unsteady son, the peasant, the parasite, the rapacious and the disinterested *demi-mondaine*, the parvenu, the aristocrat—types of which several had already been foreshadowed in the drama of Sicily.

The chorus still lived on, but without organic relation to the play. Already in the Middle Comedy its functions were practically restricted to dancing, with or without interlude-song (*embolimon*); and seemingly this continued until

the third century, when the chorus, reduced in numbers, sank to a mere troop of supernumerary dancers.[1]

In the period of New Comedy (about 336-250 B.C.) there are among the sixty-four poets known to tradition six writers of special distinction.

Menandros, the master of this school, was the nephew of Alexis; he was born in 342, and died in 291. His eminence is attested by the frequent imitations of the Roman stage. Terence adapted his *Eunuch*, *Brothers*, *Perinthian Girl*, *Self-Tormentor*, and *Andrian Girl*; the *Poenulus*, *Bacchides*, and *Stichus* of Plautus are copies of his *Carthaginian*, *Double Deceiver*, and *Brother-Lover*; and other imitations were essayed by Statius Caecilius, Luscius Lanuvinus, Atilius, and Turpilius.[2]

Philemon (361-263) has also partly survived; for his *Merchant* and *Treasure* are the originals of the *Mercator* and *Trinummus* of Plautus.

Diphilos, contemporary with Menandros, has likewise come down through Plautine adaptation. His *Klērūmenoi* is the original of the *Casina*, and the *Vidularia* and *Rudens* are based on two parallel comedies of his. The *Asinaria* too is perhaps derived from him. Apparently his *Sappho*, where with a fine scorn of chronology Hipponax and Archilochos are made the heroine's lovers, bordered on the Middle Comedy.

Poseidippos began his career three years after the death of Menandros. It is possible that much of his *Homoioi* is preserved in Plautus' *Menaechmi*.

The two other writers of chief rank are Apollodoros and Philippides; apparently both were contemporary with Menandros, the latter perhaps being somewhat older.

Comedy-writing, like most things, was essayed in Alexandreia by Kallimachos among others. Here too

[1] See Dörpfeld-Reisch, *Griech. Theater*, 263 f.

[2] Besides those already known, a new fragment of the poet has recently been found and published by Jules Nicole, *Le Laboureur de Menandre, fragments inédits sur papyrus d'Egypte*, Basle, 1897.

flourished Machon about 200 B.C. Comedies are also ascribed to Timon.

Of writers later than the New Comedy we have practically no knowledge. Seemingly under Roman influence comedy too faded away. In the age of the early emperors a few persons are recorded to have written original comedies; but the comic muse of Greece had long been dead.

Of the later Dorian drama of Rhinthon and his school, which was nearly contemporary with the New Comedy, we have already spoken (above, iv. § 2).

CHAPTER VIII

The Later Theatre of Athens

§ 1. **The Theatre of the Fourth Century.**[1]—In the fourth century the great theatre of Dionysos Eleuthereus at Athens underwent a considerable change, developing into what is known as the 'theatre of Lykurgos,' from the statesman under whose administration the first great alteration was completed.

The orchestra was now moved some 15 m. further towards the north, and narrowed in diameter to about 19·61 m., according to Dörpfeld's measurements. The auditorium was built of stone; on the north and west the lines of seats formed nearly complete concentric circles. The chief entrances were still the *parodoi*; but besides these there were passages (apparently two on the east side and two on the west) leading from without into the *diazōmata*, two corridors skirting the rows of seats. The upper diazoma apparently came directly under the fourteenth row from the top, the lower under the thirty-second row from the upper diazoma; thirty-two rows separated the latter from the orchestra, which was skirted by a water-channel.

The skene was no longer in the orchestra; it stood outside, at the end furthest from the auditorium. It was now of stone, and about 4 m. in height. To the right and the left of it were projecting wings or *paraskēnia*, and in its

[1] The chief authority for the following two paragraphs is Dörpfeld-Reisch, *Das Griechische Theater*.

front were perhaps three doors. The front was decorated with columns, the spaces between which may have been walled up in part. It is still more uncertain whether the spaces between the columns masking the *paraskenia* were walled up,

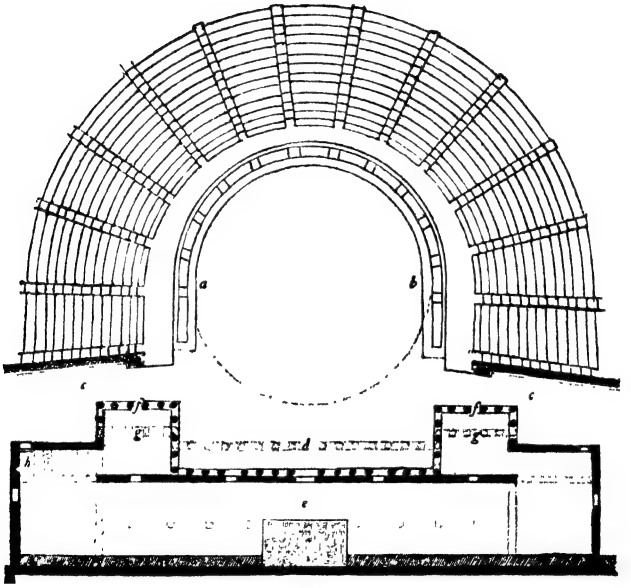


FIG. 10.—THE THEATRE OF LYKURGOS (AFTER DÖRPFELD)

ab—orchestra. *cc*—parodoi. *d*—proskenion. *e*—skene.
ff—paraskenia. *gg*—Hellenistic paraskenia. *h*—staircase.

or left partly open, or filled with painted boards suggesting scenery (*pinakes*). The use of the *proskenion*—a movable wooden wall masking the front of the skene, and terminated

by the *paraskenia*[1]—led, before the end of this century, to a stage. This stage was the narrow platform hitherto reserved for the epiphany of gods (*theologeion*), which now received a background of wood[2] and was widened by the addition of the roof joining to it the top of the *proskenion*. It became the usual, though not invariable, standing-place for all actors (*logeion*, to use a word of the next century), while the chorus remained in the orchestra. A skilful explanation of this change has been advanced,[3] to this effect. When the stone skene first came into use in this century, it served very well as background to the New Comedy or Drama of Manners played in the orchestra, as it represented a colonnaded street in the city. But it did not in the least suggest a temple or palace, and so could not act as background to tragedy. So a *proskenion* of wood or textile materials, painted in perspective, and perhaps with *pinakes* or curtains between its columns, was put up, and before this background tragedy was played in the orchestra. But in the course of this century the divorce between the action of the tragic player and the tragic chorus became complete, perhaps as complete as in the later Roman drama, and then the tragic actor appeared on the *logeion*, which received a suitable background. The classical tragedies, when brought out anew, were played in the orchestra, as of old; but when 'adapted' they were acted on the *logeion*. Finally the New Comedy (perhaps in an 'adapted' form) mounted the *logeion* too; whether the satyr-play ever did so is uncertain.

The width of the *proskenion*—*i.e.* the distance between the *paraskenia*—was 20·95 m., while the projection of the *paraskenia* was 4·93 m., which in the next period was reduced by about 1·90 m. The auditorium was capable of seating about 17,000 spectators.

When no plays were being performed, and the skene was consequently not covered by a *proskenion*, the theatre came

[1] See above, vi. § 2.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] By Professor Robert, *Hermes*, xxxii. 450 ff.

to be regularly used for public meetings (*ekklēsiai*), and probably the orators spoke from the *logeion*.

§ 2. **The Hellenistic Theatre.**[1]—It is impossible to rigidly distinguish all developments of the fourth century from those of the Hellenistic period, *i.e.* the period from the end of the fourth century until the beginning of our era. But to the Hellenistic theatre may be with certainty attributed the use of a stone *proskenion*, a row of columns forming a narrow covered corridor in front of the skene and rising about 4 m. in height, so that its roof was on a level with that of the lower story of the skene, thereby constituting a solid platform for the actors or *logeion*. The spaces between most of the columns were filled up by the painted *pinakes*; that in the centre and that immediately to its left contained a central and a smaller door respectively. In general the *proskenion* suggested the façade of a house, normally perhaps a large house, with a smaller on one or both sides. If the satyr-play or other dramas were still performed in the orchestra, a painted wall could be put up before the *proskenion*, or different *pinakes*, painted with appropriate scenery, placed between the columns. Furthermore, the front of the *paraskenia* was drawn back by nearly 2 m., so as to considerably widen the mouths of the *parodoi*.

On top of the *proskenion* was the narrow platform of the *logeion*, which now served usually as a stage.[2] Its background was the upper story of the skene, which was now wholly of stone and decorated probably in much the same way as the lower story. The *scaena ductilis*, as the Romans called it—a painted background which could open in the middle and thus be drawn back into the *paraskenia*, or else be shifted thither as a whole—was apparently used here; we read also of 'upper paraskenia' in Delos,[3] which would

[1] On this see Dörpfeld, *Athen. Mittheilungen*, xxii. 439, and Bethe, *Hermes*, xxxiii. 313.

[2] Its depth in the ideal Vitruvian theatre is one-seventh of the diameter of the orchestra.

[3] *Bulletin de Corresp. Hellénique*, xviii. 162.

be useful for a similar purpose, as well as to contain between their columns the *periaktoi*, movable walls painted with scenery and turning on a pivot. Besides the *scaena ductilis*, there were other movable walls, fixed frames in which different canvases could be inserted.[1]

The changes later undergone by the Theatre of Dionysos, firstly under the Emperor Nero, and finally through the restorations of Phaidros, cannot be here discussed; a full treatment will be found in Dörpfeld-Reisch, 82 ff.

§ 3. **Machinery and Properties.**[2]—The *mechane* or crane was still used. The *ekkyklema* after the fifth century apparently appeared in a new form, as a painted wall revolving on a pivot, and bears also the names *exeliktrā* and *exōstrā*. The growing tendency towards realism everywhere led to a great development of the simpler machinery of the older theatre; we read of elaborate devices for producing peals of thunder (*bronteion*) and flashes of lightning (*keraunoskopeion*), and in niches around the auditorium, says Vitruvius, were placed bronze vessels (*ēcheia*) to increase the vibrations of the players' voices. There was apparently an altar of Apollon Agyieus, as a rule, before the houses in comedy, and of course a temple had its altar.

The costumes of the tragic players doubtless increased in brilliance and variety as taste degenerated. It may be questioned whether some of the dresses usually attributed to the fifth century[3] do not really belong to this later period. At any rate, the costumes now became more extravagant; the *kothornos* and *onkos* were higher, the padding more exaggerated. The dress of New Comedy had to be kept near to that of daily life; that of the satyr-play was probably the same as that which, following tradition, we have ascribed to the fifth century.

[1] These, like the *scaena ductilis*, have all the name *skēnē*, a sense of the word to be carefully distinguished from the classical usage, in which it only applied to the booth in the orchestra. How far they were used in the fourth century in place of the *proskenion* is quite uncertain. See Dörpfeld, p. 138 ff.

[2] Compare above, vi. § 3.

[3] Above, vi. § 4 (1).

The division of the typical tragic masks into six of old men, eight of youths, eleven of women, and three of attendants, which is given by Pollux, is perhaps, but not certainly, later than the fifth century; so too with the distinction of three types of satyroi beside the Papposilenos. The New Comedy, aiming at *ēthos* or character-study, tended to a decided individualisation of comic masks; hence it had eleven masks for young men, fourteen for young women.

§ 4. **The Performance.**—By the fourth century the system was quite developed under which the protagonist was manager and contractor for his troupe. As remarked above,[1] it became customary for each tragic protagonist to play in one piece of each of the competing poets; in 341 B.C. each alternately plays once in a first, once in a second, and once in a third play of the three trilogies of which one was produced on each day of the Dionysia. The tragic protagonist at the Dionysia who was adjudged to have acquitted himself best earned thereby the right of acting at the next year's festival; a law of Lykurgos seemingly gave to the protagonists of comedy who were successful in a competition held a month before the feast a like privilege of performance at the Dionysia.

As originality waned, reproductions of classical plays became more frequent. Often a protagonist brought them out in their original form; in so doing he was *hors de concours*, and probably was reimbursed by the State.[2] A law of Lykurgos bound the players to keep to the official texts which were prepared under his administration. The plays of Aischylos, it is said, were allowed to be produced as new, and as such were admitted to the competition without the usual preliminary examination.[3] On the other hand, classical

[1] Above, vi. § 5.

[2] These 'old plays' in the fourth century took precedence of the competing plays; first came a 'satyr-play,' then an 'old play,' then the 'new' or competing dramas.

[3] The Medicean Scholiast suggests that this was already the rule in the fifth century.

plays were frequently brought out in an 'adapted' form, and as such were only admitted to the competition under the usual regulations applying to new plays.

We have already summarised the history of the chorus.[1] Its performance became more and more a musical-mimical interlude. In comedy it was already in decay at the beginning of the century; in the *Ekklesiazusai* and *Plutos* there is only a half-chorus of twelve, which in the former are all singers, while in the latter only the leader sings. About 320 B.C. prizes ceased to be given to both comic and tragic choruses at the Dionysia. Chorus-singing became usually a profession; the chorus was either paid by the protagonist, or it shared in the earnings of a club of 'artistes' (*technītai*) to which it belonged.

That the Lenaia were still felt to be the true seat of comedy is shown by the fact that inscriptions attest here in 354-3 B.C. a twofold competition of both comic poets and their protagonists, whereas the latter had no competition among themselves at the Dionysia until the second century; and it is significant that, while comedies were acted first at the Dionysia as a sort of prelude to the tragedies, the reverse order was usual at the Lenaia.[2]

In only one other detail of importance, as far as we know, did the arrangements of the festivals differ from those of the fifth century. Owing to the increasing impoverishment of Athens, the State nominally took over the functions of the *choregoi*,[3] but in reality left the expense to be defrayed by a rich citizen whose official title is *agōnothetēs*; he now presided over the Dionysia and Lenaia, thus taking over functions which hitherto had been exercised by the 'eponymous archon' and the 'archon-king' respectively.[4]

Flute-solos came to be an important part of the performance;

[1] Above, vii. §§ 1, 3.
[2] See too vi. § 5.
[3] Above, vi. § 4 (2).
[4] Under the Emperors *choregoi* reappear by the side of an *agonothetes*.

and parallel with this went the development of the actor's *rôle*, which was now extended to include dancing. The Greek dance always contained a large element of Southern pantomime or gesticulation, which was also a necessary accompaniment of the actor's speech; but this new departure is surprising, and significant of decay.

APPENDIX I

The Roman Drama

§ 1. The Roman drama, as it has come down to us, is so profoundly influenced by its Greek models that it is necessary to briefly review it.

When in 240 B.C. Lucius Livius Andronicus, a Greek slave brought to Rome in 272, and now a teacher of Greek, brought out at the Ludi Romani adaptations of Greek comedy and tragedy, the interest of the higher classes was immediately drawn towards this literary exotic. Greek form, as far as was then possible, was imposed on the Italian spirit. An attempt was made by the Campanian Naevius to give prominence to the latter in his *praetextae*,[1]—plays Greek in form but treating episodes in Roman history, as his *Romulus* and his celebration of Marcellus' victories in 222 B.C. He also produced tragedies of the usual type, and comedies.

The next great author is Titus Maccius Plautus (born about 250 B.C.). His plays are adaptations from Menandros, Philemon, Diphilos, and perhaps, in the case of the *Amphitruo*, from the Phlyakes; but in lyrical metres, which play an important part in his dramas, he is very largely independent. He treated his originals with great freedom, shortening and combining at will, and as he cared little for correctness in detail his plays often show a strange mixture of Greek and Roman allusions. Sometimes a study of character, sometimes a pure intrigue or farce, sometimes parody of myth or 'melodrama,' the Plautine drama, by its vigour rather than by its elegance, long ruled the stage.

Under Ennius (born 239) was consummated the domination of Greek form. His model was in the main Euripides, and he

[1] This name was derived from the heroes' dress, the *toga praetexta*; similarly the *palliata* was the comedy (adapted from the Greek) where the Greek *pallium* was worn, the *togata* the comedy whose scene lay in Italy.

produced numerous tragedies, comedies, and *praetextae*. Pacuvius (born 220), whom for his learning and lofty style Cicero calls the greatest of Latin tragedians, also wrote *praetextae* and tragedies. A contemporary and friend of Ennius was Statius Caecilius, who modelled his work on Menandrian comedy. To the same school belongs Publius Terentius Afer (born *c.* 185, died 159 B.C.), who, unlike Plautus, carefully keeps the Greek tone of his originals. He is, in Cicero's phrase, a *Menander sedatis motibus*; he is at his best in refined study of character, at his worst in action, and he wrote less for the public than for the *salon*. His metres are far less varied than those of Plautus, for his strong point is elegant dialogue. In him and the contemporary writers of *palliatae* (Aquilius, Vatronius, Atilius, Iuventius, Turpilius, Luscius Lanuvinus, Trabea, Licinius Imbrex) this style of drama practically came to an end. The older tragedy did not long survive it; its last great writer was Lucius Accius (born 170), also a composer of the *praetexta*. Tragedies were written also by Gaius Titius (flourished about 160) and by Gaius Iulius Caesar Strabo (died 87); but neither obtained more than a *succès d'estime*. Atilius also composed tragedies.

More fruitful was the attempt to foster a national comedy (*togata*) corresponding to the *praetextae*. The scene of the *togata* was always Italy, and its object character-studies. Writers of it were Titinius (second century), Afranius (contemporary with Terence), and Titus Quinctius Atta (died perhaps in 77 B.C.).

When the new political era began under Augustus, the drama had ceased to exist, except in small literary circles. Its place in public interest was taken by the *Mimi* and the *Atellanae*. The former were vulgar presentments of character or situation, compounded of song, dance, and dialogue, whose most distinguished composers were Decius Laberius (105-43 B.C.) and Publilius Syrus; women played in them, and cuckoldry was a stock subject. The latter, unlike the *mimi*, required masks. Having been brought to Rome about 200 B.C., they were played by dilettantes, and were raised to the rank of literature by Novius and Pomponius. They had stock characters—Pappus the pantaloon, Maccus the blockhead, Bucco the braggart, and Dossennus the greedy rogue—and to some extent trenched on the domain of the Rhinthonic phlyakes. An attempt to revive the *togata* was made in the *trabeata* of Gaius Melissus, a freedman of Maecenas; but its success was brief.

The purely literary tragedy was attempted by Pollio and by Augustus himself; Ovid's *Medea* and Varius' *Thyestes* were the most successful of their age. In a later generation were composed the only Latin tragedies that have come down to us intact, the Senecan *corpus*. Seneca undoubtedly is the author of the *Hercules Furens*, *Troades*, *Phoenissae*, *Medea*, *Phaedra*, *Œdipus*, *Thyestes*, and *Agamemnon*, which bear his name; at least the latter part of the *Hercules Œtaeus* is spurious, and the *Octavia* (the only extant specimen of a *praetexta*) must have been written after Nero. Characteristic of these plays is the complete suppression of the dramatic by the rhetorical spirit. Instead of simply adapting like the older dramatists, the rhetorician totally recasts the subject-matter, so as to give full play to his forced oratory, his cheap philosophic and political wisdom, his epigrammatic style, and sensational effects. Character-study or development of subject-matter he neglects; his play is rather a series of scenes. Formally the strictest 'propriety' is observed. The play is divided into five acts; the entrance of an actor and the position of the scene are carefully announced; there are only three players, excluding the chorus; the metre is most careful. Whether these plays were ever acted is doubtful; those of Seneca's contemporary Pomponius Secundus (on national and Greek subjects) certainly were. Curiatius Maternus, contemporary with the latter, wrote on similar subjects. To the same period belong Faustus, Paccius, Rubrenus Lappa, and Scaeva Memor. Between 50 and 100 A.D. Marcus Pomponius Bassulus of Aeclanum achieved some local notoriety by writing original comedies and translating Menandros, and Vergilius Romanus essayed composition in the style of Old Comedy and translation from the New.

§ 2. Plays were exhibited in Rome on the occasion of public games held by the State, and also when votive, triumphal, dedicatory, or other extraordinary shows were celebrated either on behalf of the State or at the instance of some individual. The State never paid more than a part of the expenses of the official games; the rest was defrayed by the magistrate presiding. The latter, or (in the case of unofficial shows) the person giving the games, made a contract with a *dominus gregis* or impresario, who purchased plays for representation, which then became his property and part of the *répertoire* of the company (*grex*). The number of actors was limited by no fixed

rule as in Greece. The *domini* were also protagonists, and held among themselves competitions, of which the prize was a palm.

A chorus existed still in tragedy; its place was on the stage, and in the interludes it danced, as also did occasionally the actors (compare above, vii. § 3, viii. § 4). Comedies had no chorus, but merely a flute accompaniment, to which an actor sang lyrical solos between the (usually three) acts. Besides also giving solos, the flute-player had to accompany the melodramatic or the recitative delivery of all the non-lyrical parts except the iambic trimeters, which were simply declaimed.[1] Masks in the regular drama were not worn until about 100 B.C.

From the song in the interludes arose the *pantomimus* or gesture-play to a musical accompaniment. Tradition says that Livius Andronicus, his voice failing him, had his part sung by an actor behind the scenes, while he himself went through all the gestures of the *rôle* on the stage. This is perhaps merely a fiction to account for the origin of pantomime, which rapidly rose to the rank of an independent performance.

A stone stage in Rome was unknown until 174 B.C.; twenty-nine years later was built a complete auditorium of wood, with regular seats; and finally, in 55 B.C., was constructed the first perfect theatre of stone.

The main lines of the developed Roman theatre have been well described by Dörpfeld,[2] whose views may be here summarised. The low broad stage (*pulpitum*) is in origin part of the Greek orchestra, for it is usually on an approximate level with the lowest seats; the remainder of the orchestra has been relatively lowered a few feet, and this space, as the chorus played on the stage, was used as an arena or as a 'pit' for privileged spectators. From the stage steps ran to the orchestra below. At its back was the actors' room (*scaena*, skene), which was masked by a line of columns with statues between them and corresponding to the stone *proskenia* of the Greek theatre. When a wooden or canvas roof was put over the building, this background had to be raised by the use of several stories to the level of the highest seats. The background contained five doors. The length of the stage and its background is twice the diameter of the circle of the orchestra, this great extension of the skene being apparently a result of its increased height and the roofing. It now extended as far as the side-gates

[1] See above, vi. § 4 (2).
[2] *Griech. Theater*, 158 f., 385 f.

of the Greek theatres, so that much of the space covered in Greece by the *parodoi* was here taken up by the stage. The *parodoi* still survived, but only as entrances to the stage; for the public, passages were constructed directly in front of the stage, which led into the orchestra and limited the dimension of the auditorium to a semicircle.

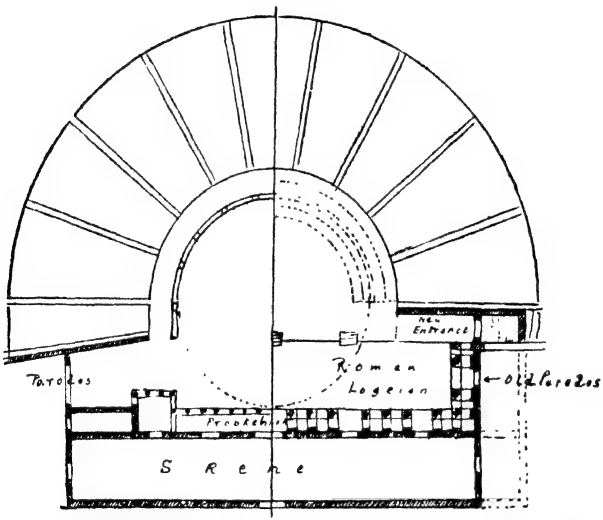


FIG. 11.—Figure showing development of Roman from Greek stage (after Dörpfeld). On the left is half of the Greek theatre, on the right half of the Roman.

APPENDIX II

The Parabasis[1]

A COMPLETE or ideal *parabasis* would fall under the following scheme:—

(1) A short lyric (*kommation*), limited to no particular kind of metre; the *parabasis* proper, consisting of tetrametric and usually anapaestic verses, in which the chorus either speaks in the person of the poet or as his deputy; finally, a few short hurried sentences (*pnigos*) leading to

(2) An ode (*ōidē*), of free metres like the first *kommation*; then follows an *epirrhēma* of trochaic tetrameters, in which the chorus returns to its proper *rôle*, succeeded by a *pnigos* of trochaic dimeters. This triad should regularly be followed by an antistrophic *antode*, *antepirrhema*, and *antipnigos*.

[1] See for details Zielinski, *Gliederung der altattischen Komödie*, 175 ff.

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Printed by T. and A. Constable, Printers to Her Majesty
at the Edinburgh University Press